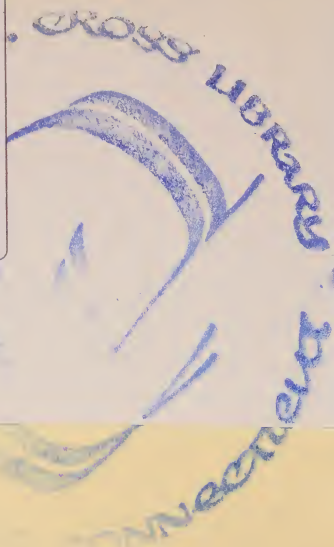



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# Convent Life Unveiled

By MISS EDITH O'GORMAN

WITH AN APPENDIX



Sister Teresa DeChantal.

WRITTEN BY HERSELF



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# Convent Life Unveiled:

TRIALS AND PERSECUTIONS

OF

Miss Edith O'Gorman

OTHERWISE SISTER TERESA DE CHANTAL

With an Appendix

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WRITTEN BY HERSELF

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THIRTY-SECOND EDITION

PRINTED BY  
TRUSLOVE & BRAY, Ltd., WEST NORWOOD, S. E.

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## APPENDIX.

CONTAINING AN INTERESTING ACCOUNT OF HER RE-  
MARKABLE MEETING WITH REV. WM. M. WALSH,  
IN AUSTRALIA, AFTER NINETEEN YEARS.



## PREFACE TO THE 32nd ENGLISH EDITION.

*Three hundred and ten thousand since 1881.*

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THE first edition (10,000 copies) of this book, "Convent Life Unveiled," was published by the Connecticut Publishing Company at Hartford, Conn., United States, in February, 1871. It was a handsomely bound book, retailed at \$1.50 (six shillings), and had an immense circulation throughout the United States and British America. Shortly after our arrival in England, I noticed the apathy and ignorance of the English Protestants of all denominations upon the Romish Conventual and Monastic System; therefore, considering the great need for enlightening the public upon this vital and important subject, I had in the autumn of 1881 a cheaply-bound edition issued in the present form, to be retailed at one shilling per copy, so that it might more freely circulate among all classes of the British public. It will interest the hundreds of thousands of my Christian readers to know that its popularity is ever on the increase, and that it has been translated into the French, German, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, Norwegian, and other languages. Its enormous circulation throughout the world proves it to be the most reliable source of information on conventual institutions that has ever been published. It is the ONE book that the Romish Church HATES and FEARS more than any other on the subject, because of its UNREFUTABLE FACTS. The circulation of my books and thousands of lectures delivered have been the means of arousing the British public to the danger of Rome's AGGRESSIVE ENCROACHMENTS on the rights of FREE SPEECH, FREE PRESS, and LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE, purchased by martyred forefathers. Rome is unchangeable in her intolerant persecution; had she the POWER NOW, she would BURN Protestants, and torture them in the Inquisition; a true fact, proved by her numerous attempts on my life; when an assassin's bullet pierced my bonnet, and over a

● hundred times I have been assailed by mobs, led by priests, assembled in thousands outside of halls, murder in their hearts, weapons in their hands to kill us. My faith in God's promises sustained me in the midst of such terrible and indescribable fury of fiendish and vindictive mobs. I feel immortal until God's work is done through me. I firmly believe in His holy promises all through the Bible. The 91st Psalms have been my strong armour of Faith in His blessed promise of protection to all who place their entire trust in Him. He hath miraculously delivered us out of the hands of our vindictive enemies who sought our lives, and by His Grace and Power enabled me to advocate His Truth against Popish errors for the past forty-four years. During the first twenty-three years of my married life, from 1870 to 1893, my well-beloved and ever-lamented husband, who was converted from the Romish priesthood in France at the same time I escaped from the convent in America, in 1868, helped me in the work and shared all dangers and bitter persecution; when night after night facing thousands of fierce mobs of Papists, who assailed us with showers of bricks, stones, iron, clinkers, garden forks, pistols, steel arrows, demolishing our cabs, etc. No one can realize the horror of such scenes of terror except those who have passed through them. It was such awful scenes that at last brought on the heart disease which took my beloved husband to his heavenly home on the 25th of June, 1893, in the fiftieth year of his useful and saintly life. He died a MYRTYR of Christ in defense of Protestant truth. For the past twenty years I have, alone with God, waged war against Popish error and the evils of the Conventual System. I am now seventy years of age, yet God gives me the power and strength to deliver two lectures a day of one hour and a half and two hours duration to large and enthusiastic audiences, traveling from

town to city throughout England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. During the first twelve years after my conversion in August, 1869, I lectured in every town and city of importance throughout the United States and Canada, until in June, 1881, we came to England and lectured throughout Great Britain until 1885, when we sailed for New Zealand and the Colonies. I lectured in New Zealand for six months with great acceptance. We began our work at Sydney, New South Wales, in March, 1886, and lectured in that thriving colony for six months; also for the same length of time through Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, and Tasmania with great success, thousands being converted. We returned to England in 1888; since then I have again lectured throughout Great Britain, my lectures, and the circulation of my books, have been the means in God's hands of arousing the British public to the necessity of immediate action in demanding Parliament to enact laws for the public inspection of all convents and monasteries, which are the only public institutions in the British Empire that are daily defying the law and remain free from public inspection. There should be nothing to fear from inspection if they are such holy places as the Papists would have Protestants believe. Rome claims exemption on the FALSE plea that they are private. All these convents set up laundries and orphan asylums, reformatories, boarding schools, colleges, and seminaries, where hundreds are kept and supported by public funds. Many orders of nuns and monks go their daily rounds of begging money for these institutions. How can such places be called private, living and kept up by public money—mostly Protestant money? Protestants send their children to these convent schools, where they are taught nothing in SOLID essential branches of science, history, arithmetic, grammar, algebra, astronomy, etc. They receive a

showy SUPERFICIAL display of accomplishments, such as music, dancing, drawing, languages, ornamental needlework, etc., which is not thorough education. How can Protestant parents be so inconsistent as to propagate and support the errors and idolatries that they should protest against by sending their precious children into these DENS OF PROSELYTISM, endangering their faith, deluding themselves with the idea that no effort will be made to indoctrinate them with Popish errors, as assured by the nuns? Dear Protestant parents, are you not aware that the Romish Church is one of EXCLUSIVE PRETENTIONS, believing ALL without its pale DOOMED TO ETERNAL DAMNATION, and they are bound by their rules and vows to make every effort for the conversion (?) of HERETICS. If you are ignorant of this, it is the result of indifference, and it is truly unpardonable in the face of these facts to endanger the spiritual welfare of your precious children, when there are so many noble institutions in this Protestant land, taught by intelligent and experienced Christian teachers; where the youthful mind may be trained to adorn society and the world. Since our return from Australia in 1888 I have added an Appendix to this book, wherein I relate the facts concerning my most providential meeting with Father Wm. M. Walsh, the very same priest who was the cause of my escape from St. Joseph's Convent, Jersey City, twenty years before, and whom I believed to be dead since 1871, until God in His wonderful providence brought me face to face with him at Townsville, in the tropics of Queensland, Australia. For the Roman Catholic people I have nothing but love and pity; for their conversion I pray daily, and thousands have been converted, among them my own dear parents and brothers, and other members of my dear family. But the Romish system of religion I hate and condemn as the most cruel and intolerant system in the world. My readers will

notice that in this book I give the names of the priests, bishops, and archbishops, of the nuns and superiors of whom I have had occasion to write, many of them living now; therefore, if they could have proved one statement in this book to be untrue, long ago they would have prosecuted me for LIBEL. When the first edition of this book appeared in February, 1871, I had fifty special copies struck off, containing an autograph letter addressed to the heads of the Romish Hierarchy in the diocese of New York and in New Jersey, sending a copy to each, challenging them to read the book, and if they could prove one statement therein to be untrue, they could SUE me for LIBEL, etc. Within the week after Archbishop McCloskey, late Cardinal of New York City, had received the special copy I sent him, he became so terribly afraid of the book, which he knew to be TRUE, that he sent Rev. Father James McGahann—intimate friend of Rev. Father Wm. M. Walsh—to my residence in Jersey City, with the BRIBE that Cardinal McCloskey would secure more money to me than I could ever realize from the book or lectures if I would cease to bring such terrible scandal upon the “holy” (?) church through my book and lectures. But my answer was to tell Cardinal McCloskey that there was not money enough in the TEEMING coffers of Rome laden with the wealth of this world to PURCHASHE ONE PAGE of this book from me. This fact speaks for itself. I shall continue with God’s help to wage war against the wicked Conventual System and the pagan errors and idolatries of Popery with voice and pen during the remaining years of life, as I have done for the past forty-four years. May God’s blessing rest on all efforts for the conversion of Roman Catholics and all who are out of the *one true fold* of Christ. The conversion of my own dear family is worth to me all the cruel persecutions I have endured.



I have been persecuted by my bitter enemies as never man or woman before for the past two centuries. From my heart I forgive all my enemies, and in the words of my dying Savior I can say "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

EDITH O'GORMAN-AUFFRAY.

*London, August, 1913.*

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## PREFACE TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

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I do not solicit the attention of the public for the purpose of exciting sympathy or of seeking personal redress. Sympathy, though grateful, can do little to repair misfortunes, or to redress some wrongs. As for vengeance, if it be proper to consider it at all, it must be left with Him who has said that it is His, and that "He will repay." I write because I feel that I ought not to be—nay, cannot be—silent, knowing what I personally do of the wrongs and errors incident to the Romish system of religion, and knowing also that the unvarnished *truth* will never be given to the public except by those who can write, as I can, from personal experience and positive knowledge.

My object is purely charitable. I wish to enlighten the blind, deluded, and superstitious Roman Catholics with reference to the errors of their religion, and the unnatural discipline and pernicious influence of the conventual life; and also to arouse the luke-warm, indifferent, and unsuspecting among Protestants whose daughters may be attendants of some convent school, where they are being enticed from them through the intrigues and cunning of Jesuits and Sisters of Charity, who are adepts in beguiling unstable hearts through the empty, theatrical, and alluring ceremonies of a religion which has a peculiar charm for children and weak minds, and for all who live according to the senses—not the spirit.

I have also truthfully detailed my own bitter experi-

ence, so replete with persecution and sorrow, that it will cause many to exclaim, "Is it possible that one woman can have endured such numerous and severe trials?" Few, indeed, have tasted sorrow like unto mine; and I now bless "the Hand that chasteneth," for in no other way could I be cleansed from the dross of Romish superstition than by the purifying furnace of tribulation. Through the gate of suffering I have come out of bondage, and entered into the "liberty of the children of God." May this true book be the means of saving hundreds of immortal souls from the slavery of Romanism and the living tomb of convents!

EDITH O'GORMAN-AUFFRAY.

*Jersey City, 1871.*

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#### INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

BY REV. HENRY A. CORDO, Pastor of the North Baptist Church, Jersey City, New Jersey, U. S. A., Dec. 15, 1870

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A REMARKABLE experience and wonderful success are here narrated. The author of this book had suffered greatly at the hands of a powerful ecclesiastical hierarchy. Here in this city she has spent most of her convent life, and here she escaped from that whited sepulchre. Here, where she was well known and honored by the Roman Catholics as an exemplary nun, who for three years filled the office of assistant Sister Superior, and for over one year was Lady Superior, which high office she held when she escaped. Here, a little more than a year ago, one month after her wonderful conversion, she came penniless and friendless, yet with strong faith in God and her cause, to tell the story of her sufferings and to unmask the errors of the Romish Church and the evils of Conventualism. With earnest purpose, manifest sincerity, and conscientious motives, she addressed herself to a task for which but few would have had sufficient courage. Public attention was immediately awakened, and an intense public interest aroused

on behalf of a young woman who simply claimed the right to tell the story of conventual cruelties and to vindicate herself against the unjust aspersions of her enemies. Her conventual experience is here truthfully given for wider dissemination among the American public. As a brief history of an eventful life, and as a significant protest against a church which had misguided her, this book is deserving of an extended circulation and careful perusal. It affords me pleasure to speak of the high regard and esteem in which the author is held in this city. It has been my great privilege to baptize and receive her into full membership of the North Baptist Church of this city on the 26th of December, 1869. As her friend and pastor, I commend her and her great work begun in this city, through her eloquent and instructive lectures, her thrilling and interesting book, to the favor of the public wherever God leads her. I express the hope that her candid story and great mission may be abundantly blest in the conversion of thousands.—Respectfully,

HENRY A. CORDO.

*Pastor of the North Baptist Church, Jersey City, N. J.*



## CHAPTER I.

### MY DEPARTURE FROM HOME.

I AM the eldest of eight children, and was born in Ireland, August 20, 1842, of respectable parents. My mother belongs to a high and noble family; her maiden name was Margaret Byron. My father belongs to an ancient Irish family. The record of my family ancestry has been irreproachable, without stain or blemish, thank God. My father, who was an extensive, prosperous landlord in Ireland, left his estate to the care of his agent in the year 1848, and, taking his wife and three children with him, went on a visit to the United States, intending to return to his estate again, after having seen a portion of that great country. But my parents were both so delighted with the liberties and progress of the country, together with the culture, refinement, and courteous society of the American people, all of which were so congenial to their own tastes, that they concluded to make their home among them; which they did, locating in the beautiful little State of Rhode Island, one of the Puritan New England States, where my family, since 1850, have been highly respected, morally, intellectually, and socially, by all who knew them.

From my infancy, I was carefully instructed by my good mother, who instilled in my soul a deep reverence for the creed and traditions of the Roman Catholic faith. I was educated in a Protestant seminary, from which I graduated at seventeen years of age, and there bravely confronted every opposition or reproach offered to my religion. I defended its tenets; I would have given my life for its preservation, for the defence of its reputed purity, as I am now willing to have calumny and perse-

cution, aye, even death, for the unmasking of its impurity and errors. I was inclined to prayer and piety from my early childhood. I longed for something better than the fleeting follies of society, than the empty vanities of a sinful and ungodly world. "As the hart, wearied with the chase, panteth after cooling waters," so did my soul pant for the life-giving fountain of Eternal Truth. Earthly pleasures failed to fill the void in my heart—indeed, that heart is narrow which can be filled by aught save the perfect love of God. I sought peace at the shrine of the Virgin Mary and the Saints; at the Confessional; in the confraternities of scapulars and rosaries; but all in vain. I could find no abiding place in Christ. My senses were charmed with the imposing forms and ceremonies, the music, flowers, candles, pictures, and beautiful images, which constitute the worship of Roman Catholics; but, possessing an instructed intelligence, my soul remained empty. Were I mere being of sense, only, I might have been satisfied.

In August, 1861, I was visiting in the renowned and fashionable watering place of Newport, R. I. I sought forgetfulness of religion among the gay and giddy throng in pursuit of worldly pleasure. But my heart and soul became disgusted and wearied with the emptiness and vanity of such a life. I was certainly created to be something more than a mere votary of fashion and folly. However, a change was near. The 15th of August is observed as a holy day of obligation among Roman Catholics for honoring the Assumption of Mary into Heaven. I attended mass that morning in St. Mary's Church, of Newport; in the afternoon I went to confession to Father J. Hughes, my regular confessor, who was visiting Newport at that time for the purpose of assisting Father O'Rielly, who was then in poor health. In obedience to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, which enjoin penitents to disclose to their confessor every secret thought, every impulse of their being, I confided to Father Hughes the doubts and fears I had concerning the sufficiency of my religion. I told

him I derived no benefits from my devotions to Mary, nor from frequenting the Sacraments of Confession and Communion; that I failed to find delight or satisfaction in worldly pleasures, or in the vain pursuits of a fashionable life, and that I was most unhappy. He advised me, in the most affectionate manner, to enter a convent, as it evidently was my vocation, and the only way in which I could save my soul. He extolled the vocation of celibacy as the very highest grace that God could bestow upon His creatures; telling me I could receive no greater proof of God's love for me than being called to be the bride of His only Son Jesus Christ, and not the bride of a mere sinful creature—man. He pictured the life of a nun as a most holy and perfect imitation of the example of Christ and Mary, assuring me that within the sacred precincts of the cloisters, aided, as I could not fail to be, by the good example of my sister nuns, who were in possession of such holy peace and complete repose as the saints in Heaven were enjoying, I would soar high above the atmosphere of human love, and would live in the pure light of holiness, and the perfect love of God. He told me my nature was of such an exalted description that human affection and worldly pursuits would always fail to supply my craving for happiness, and nothing save a perfect consecration of my life to God would secure for me the heavenly peace for which I was yearning.

He advised me to read the writing of St. Alphonsus Liguori, especially the "Nun Sanctified," etc. This saint extols virgins consecrated to God, and says of all happy states the vocation of a nun is the most perfect and sublime, because their affections are not fixed on their families, nor on men of the world, nor on goods of the earth, nor on the dress and vanities of women; they are unshackled by worldly ties, by subjection to friends or relatives, and are removed from the noise and tumult of the "wicked world."

I was then nineteen years of age, an age when the heart is most susceptible to those impressions which may

be called romantic or sentimental. Naturally possessing a generous, conscientious, and enthusiastic nature, I was filled with a desire to make some great sacrifice to God; and I listened with pleasure to the advice of my confessor. Thenceforth I began to lead a new life; I would spend most of the day in church. I took great delight in self-imposed penances, such as fasting every day on one meal, and abstaining from everything that would afford my physical senses delight. I would remain hours together in prayer, and often experienced great consolation and ecstasies therefrom. In the Confessional I would speak of the visions, ecstasies, and spiritual consolations I experienced in prayer, and of my great desire of self-abnegation. My confessor flattered me in my delusion, telling me that the Lord had endowed my soul with His highest gifts, and He had designed me from all Eternity to become a great saint, "and all visions, ecstasies, and self-annihilation, came from God, and denoted great sanctity." At the same time he urged me to hasten my entrance into a convent, because, if I delayed long in the world, God would withdraw from me those heavenly gifts.

As a natural consequence of these false teachings, I soon became puffed up with my own self-righteousness, and was led to regard myself better than others. And yet I was called humble. Because humility was a virtue, I tried to acquire it by performing certain humiliating acts, which were most repugnant to my pride.

I now look back and regret the precious time wasted in the observances and practices of unprofitable devotions, hurtful in themselves, inasmuch as they were not performed for the glory of God, but on the contrary, for the glory of self. In the true light of God's grace I can now attribute all the spiritual consolations and ecstasies I experienced as a Roman Catholic of self-complacency and spiritual pride. I thought I loved God, but it was self-love actuated me. I thought I was blessed with the true light of God; yet I was perfectly blind, and knew it not. I was taught to think myself a saint, and all

the time I was ignorant of the first rudiments of true sanctity. However, like all deluded souls, I was not conscious of my true condition; I was completely charmed with the novelty of my new experience, and was sincere according to the light given me; hence, I firmly resolved to sacrifice my life on the altar of self-consecration, and sever every human tie which bound me to the world.

Naturally possessed of strong affections and deep attachments, I endured the greatest pain and anguish in sacrificing my happy home. I almost idolized my beloved parents, especially my darling mother, and the thought of a separation from them was death in itself. How *could* I leave them, never again to see their dear faces, nor hear their beloved voices? All else I could give up, but my father and mother, never! It would break my heart to leave my dear father and my own darling gentle mother, and my dearly-loved brothers and sisters.

This thought of being for ever separated from my beloved father and mother would sometimes fill my soul with doubts and murmurings against God. Why could I not love God, and arrive at sanctity, without breaking the holiest of earthly ties? Why had God given me such an affectionate nature, if it was unlawful for me to exercise it? Why must I crush and blight my life and talents within the gloomy walls of the cloister? Why bury my heart in a living sepulchre? Why shut out from myself every object of beauty and love that the hand of God had formed? Was not such a God more an arbitrary tyrant than a God of mercy and love?

I often experienced such rebellious reflections as the above, and as in duty bound, discovered them to my confessor. He would tell me such thoughts were wicked temptations from the devil, who would fain cheat me of my holy calling and perfect devotion to the religious life, by attacking me in the weakest point, my ardent affection. My spiritual director chided severely my weakness in listening for one moment to the suggestions of the



“evil one”; telling me I must choose between God and my parents. I could not serve both; and if I made choice of the latter, I would lose my immortal soul, and be damned, quoting the passage, “Whoever loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy to be My disciple.” (Whenever the Romish Church pretends to quote from the Bible it perverts and twists its true meaning in order to deceive.) My heart seemed torn from my body in the fearful struggle I endured before I could consent to give up my earthly mother, and accept the Virgin Mary in her place; however, the salvation of my soul was the one thing necessary, and I must save it, cost what it might. I made choice of God. The holocaust to Him should be complete. I thought He required the sacrifice, and I made it. “The greater the sacrifice, the greater the merit.” I was so thoroughly imbued with this false idea of salvation, that I firmly resolved to stifle every natural affection of my heart, tear asunder every earthly tie, and bid an eternal farewell to my beloved parents, my darling little brothers and sisters, and everything I held sacred and dear, and to devote my young life to a perpetual crucifixion of the nature my Creator had given me. Poor slave that I was, in my blind delusion! I could not realize that the merits of Christ had secured my salvation, independent of my self-imposed merits.

The next difficulty to be surmounted was to gain the consent of my parents, which I at first failed to do. My disposition being amiable and cheerful, I was generally loved by all my friends and relatives, and was idolized by my parents, who looked upon me as the “sunbeam” of their home: therefore, the thought of an early separation was to them unendurable. In this difficulty I also had resource to my Father confessor, who was the umpire to be consulted on every occasion. The advice I received from him was, to go without their consent if I failed to get it. I must despise the counsel and commands of my parents in this respect, and embrace the conventual life despite their wishes, because the allegi-

ance I owed to God and my spiritual guide took the precedence, and I was bound to follow his advice under penalty of committing a "grievous" sin. Bishop McFarland, who was the Romish Bishop of Providence, and a dear friend of my family, yet he condemned my parents, and called them "agents of the devil," in trying to rob God of my soul.

My parents, who were sincere Roman Catholics, not wishing to incur the risk of placing obstacles in the way of my salvation, reluctantly gave their consent, comforting themselves with the reflection that in the convent I would be numbered with the elect—fighting the good fight—one of the "chosen few." After one year spent in prayer and meditation on the important step I was about to take, the eventful day arrived when I must separate myself from all I loved on earth, all the happy and dear associations of my innocent girlhood.

The 1st of October, 1862, was my last day at home, the last day spent in the society of my beloved parents, my darling brothers and sisters, my dear associates—the last day of happiness for weary, weary years of desolation. I cannot now recall that day without the deepest emotion. Oh, why did I first break up the happy family circle? Why did I impose upon myself such a living death? Why did I not listen to the voice of my heart and of reason? But alas! it is too late now to repine, the fiat hath gone forth and can never be revoked.

I must now take the final farewell of the home circle. All are there, but in a few moments one will be absent, never again to take her accustomed place among them. I kneel at my beloved father's knee to receive his blessing, ere I leave him for ever. Tremblingly and in broken accents he prays God to bless his child, while the hot tears, dropping like rain upon my bowed head, as I listen to his prayer, convulsed me with an unspeakable grief.

Once again I lean upon my idolized mother's breast and listen to the throbbing of that loving and faithful heart, bursting with sorrow as she clasps to her embrace

for the last time, her firstborn child. Dear heart, where I had so often been pillowed and soothed in childhood, and where girlhood's griefs had so often been assuaged, shall I never rest there again? Farewell, my darling mother! Were I being conveyed from you to be buried beneath the earth I could not be more literally dead than I must henceforth be to you and to the world. Farewell, my little brothers and sisters! I will no longer soothe and humor your childish fancies, nor lull you to sleep with your accustomed lullabys. Farewell, every dear and familiar object! my eyes must rest upon you for the last time! Farewell, my beloved associates, and bosom friends! we will no longer share each other's joys and griefs. Farewell to all the loved ones, and oh, forgive me if I have ever wilfully occasioned you annoyance or pain. Father, mother, brothers, sisters, forgive all my faults, and pray for me!

All are in sobs and tears.

I at last tear myself from my mother's embrace, and the last object my eyes rested upon that never-to-be forgotten night was the beautiful loving eyes of my grief-stricken mother, looking after me so full of sorrow and tenderness.

Ah, mother, dear mother, better a thousand times for you and for me could you have seen me conveyed to the grave, than to the wrongs and sufferings that awaited me in the living tomb of the convent.

The tie is broken. The knot is severed. I am with you no more.

Farewell, home, happiness, mother—all of earth. Farewell!

---



## CHAPTER II.

## ST. ELIZABETH'S CONVENT, MADISON, N. J.

ST. ELIZABETH'S CONVENT is delightfully situated on the Morris and Essex R. R., nearly midway between the stations of Madison and Morristown, and commands a beautiful view of the surrounding country. The main building, formerly known as "Seton Hall College," is exclusively occupied by the nuns. The Academy or boarding school for young ladies is a separate building, as also is "St. Joseph's Preparatory College for Boys." The schools there are conducted with consummate skill; and with few exceptions the pupils become warmly attached to the nuns, of whose lives they see only the fair and poetic coloring which hides from the world the privations, intrigues, and horrors within. Of these schools I will speak more at length in another chapter. Adjoining the nunnery is a chapel for the use of nuns and pupils; attached to this chapel is a beautiful Gothic cottage, fitted up with many of the appurtenances of modern luxury, and occupied by the chaplain and priests. The grounds are spacious and well regulated. The buildings are shaded by tall and stately trees, giving to the place the appearance of an Eden-like retreat.

This community of Sisters of Charity is a branch of Mount St. Vincent, near Yonkers, N. Y., and was established in the diocese of New Jersey, by Bishop Bayley, of Newark, in the year 1859. Among the first of the sisters appointed to the Newark diocese was sister Mary Xavier, for whom Bishop Bayley formed a deep attachment, and as a proof of his devotion to her, he granted her the exclusive privilege of reigning "Mother Superior" for life, notwithstanding it is contrary to the rules of the order, which forbids superiors to hold office longer

than three years, and then only by vote of the sisters. However, Mother Xavier, by her shrewdness and dexterity, is well fitted to fill the office to which she had been appointed. She was about thirty years of age at that time (in 1862), somewhat below the medium height, urbane and polished in her manners, and possessed of a large share of Jesuit strategy and plausibility.

The Order of Sisters of Charity was founded by St. Vincent de Paul, in the year 1633, in France, and introduced into the United States by Mother E. Seton, in the year 1812, near Emmettsburg, Md. There is a division among the sisters of St. Vincent and the sisters of Mother E. Seton in regard to rules and dress. The sisters of Mother E. Seton are attired in a black woolen habit, with a cape covering the waist, white linen collar tastefully turned down over the cape; the face nearly concealed by a white linen coif, which covers the forehead, the ears, the sides of the face, the chin, and the throat. A long black veil is worn over the linen coif. The chaplet of beads, to which is attached a large crucifix, is suspended from the waist nearly to the feet. The habit of novices is similar to that of the professed nuns, with the exception that novices wear brown instead of black. The nuns at Madison wear the habit above described.

On the 2nd of October, 1862, at 11 a. m., I beheld for the first time this establishment, this whited sepulchre so fair and beautiful without, but within full of corruption. I was unusually depressed in spirits as I approached that convent prison in which I was thenceforth to be entombed, and shut out from the beautiful world. The outward aspect of nature seemed to pity me; the heavens were clouded and the wind sighed through the trees with the voice of a human mourner. There was a profound silence about the place, a silence which accorded with the solemn loneliness of my heart still smarting with the pain of separation from all I loved. Had death stripped me of every friend or relative on earth, I could not have felt more bereft, lonely, desolate, and grief stricken than I did that gloomy autumn morning, when I stood in the

solitude of the convent grounds, my heart and soul filled with a vague uncertainty concerning the unnatural discipline enforced within its walls. I was not wholly ignorant of the obligations required of me. I knew ere I entered that I must leave my own will, judgment, reason, and liberty outside the convent doors, and subject myself blindly to the guidance of superiors. I was tempted to turn back from the slavery, hardships, privations, and austerities of that unnatural life to the liberty, love, warmth, and protection of my father's home; but I had gone too far, I had put my hands to the plough, and if I should turn back, I would not be fit for the "Kingdom of Heaven." I approached the main entrance and rang the bell. A sad, pensive-looking nun answered my summons at the door, and ushered me into a spacious and elegantly-furnished parlor, where I was received by Mother Xaxier, who in a most gracious and affectionate manner welcomed me to her "abode of peace." She expressed herself highly pleased with the refinement of my appearance and manners, telling me that her "prayer had been answered in the Lord sending me to her, as she was very much in need of educated and accomplished nuns." She portrayed in the most glowing manner the "blessed advantage of my holy vocation which called me away from the noisy, sinful world to the safe and peaceful haven of a religious life in a convent"; assuring me I would receive an hundredfold of heavenly gifts if I would only remain faithful to my vocation, and forget my country and my father's house—because it is not sufficient that the body quit the world, the heart also must quit and break off all attachment for it. "All those," said she, "that enter our holy order must not only consider that they quit father, mother, kindred, friends, and whatsoever they possess in the world, but must believe that Jesus Christ addresses them in these words: 'He that hates not father, mother, brothers, sisters, yea, and himself, cannot be My disciple.'"

Oh, blind votaries of a benighted faith! the only sacrifice our merciful Savior requires a contrite and

humble heart, which His true disciples give Him without severing the golden links wrought by God Himself, which can not be broken with impunity, nor cast aside, nor torn asunder, without becoming a chain of iron pressing upon the bleeding heart, stifling every pure and spontaneous desire, crushing every lawful and noble affection, and leaving the heart and soul a dry, barren, desolate waste, incapable of producing aught save a diseased and noxious vegetation.

## CHAPTER III.

## THREE MONTHS' EXPERIENCE AS A CANDIDATE.

I WAS permitted to rest one week ere I would enter as a candidate, and during that time I was treated as all visitors are, with great kindness and affection, by the mother and sisters. At the end of a week I was stripped of my worldly clothes and attired in the plain black dress and white muslin cap of the candidate, and entered upon a probation of three months, during which time my disposition was studied and tried, and my pride humbled. I was sent to work in the dormitories, study halls, refectories, kitchen, and laundry. It is a custom established in all convents to employ freely candidates and novices in every species of toil, and the more repugnant and distasteful any kind of occupation is perceived to be to particular individuals, the more certainly are they chosen to perform it. Accordingly the candidate known to have been most delicately and tenderly nurtured, whose hands have never before come in contact with hard service, is there chosen to perform the most menial offices. Therefore I was chosen to perform the most distasteful work in the convent. The manner of the nuns changed from the sweet gentle beings they at first seemed, to harsh, unkind, tyrannical task-masters. I found among them every nationality and disposition. I was never accustomed to unkindness, therefore I was extremely sensitive, and deeply wounded by the least unkind look or word. I could not please the nuns, no matter how much I would try. In the dormitories I would labor two or three hours, making beds, etc., and the nun in charge without any provocation, would compel me to undo my work, and then remake them, while she would remain standing over me, with as much severity in manner and tone as a slaveholder would display towards a slave. Also in the kitchen, refectory, and laundry, everything I did the nuns termed half done, although I was confident that in many respects my work was really well done.



I was one day commanded to scrub with a brush and sand, on my knees, the large study hall. Such work was new to me, therefore most laborious. Nevertheless, I performed my task in the best manner I knew how. Moreover, being of a delicate organization, it was accomplished with great pain and difficulty, and consequently took me a long time to complete it. When my task was nearly finished, the novice mistress appeared, and in a furious manner chided me for my laziness; snatched the brush from me with such violence as to tear the skin from the palm of my hand, at the same time throwing a pail of water over the hall, thereby compelling me to re-scrub the hall in less time than it could usually be performed by a woman familiar with such work all her life, while the task was rendered next to unendurable by the pain of my hands, which were torn and bleeding. This is a small specimen of the trials which awaited me; it was but the beginning of sorrows.

On another occasion I was obliged to wash all the pots and kettles, and scour all the knives and forks in the establishment. My hands, which were naturally very soft and white, began to look soiled and dirty. Having remarked in my simplicity to Sister Margaret, the house-keeper, "Indeed, sister, I am now ashamed of my hands!" she sharply returned, "Well, thin, I'll be afther making ye more ashamed of 'em. I'll cure ye of yer worldly vanity. I'll teach ye not to fear soiling yer lily-white hands in the Lord's service." Accordingly she called me out into another room where a sister was whitewashing the walls, and commanded me to dip my hands into a pot of hot lime. I hesitated a moment, thinking certainly she could not mean it; however, I was soon convinced of her earnestness by her harsh tone, "None of yer airs now, but do as I bid ye, or I'll tell the mother of ye." I put my hands down into the hot lime, and she held them there some minutes. For several weeks my hands were in a most pitiable condition. The skin would crack and bleed at every movement, causing me to suffer the most excruciating pain, and yet I was forced to wash and hang

out clothes in the frost and cold of December, the skin from my bleeding hands often peeling off and adhering to the frozen garments. Of course, they presented a most shocking appearance, their smoothness and whiteness gone, they were red, swollen, and chapped. I made no complaint, but bore that penance in silence, remarking to a sympathizing candidate that I justly merited it for being so proud and vain of my hands.

I was one day appointed to wait on the table in the young ladies' refectory, and while there I conversed a few moments with a young lady from Providence, who recognized me, and was acquainted with many of my friends. Sister Cleophas, the refectorian, overheard me, and the consequence was, my subjection to a public humiliation before the community, being obliged to throw myself prostrate on the threshold of the community room, to be walked over as a doormat by the other sisters. Prostrating oneself under the feet of the others is an every-day penance in convents, and is imposed upon the nuns for the most trifling faults.

I could give many more instances of singular unkindness which were visited upon me during the three months' candidateship; but those mentioned must for the present suffice, as I have not time nor space to dwell long on the three months' experience when in one volume I must relate an experience of six years. Had I yielded to the temptation, which, during those three months, often urged me to fly back to my home from that cruel life, I would have been saved a great deal of suffering. but I am not one of those who, daunted by unforeseen sufferings, draw back from a purpose but half accomplished. The results often dawned upon me, but they did not intimidate me. To every fresh exaction I readily and often cheerfully submitted. I had become so thoroughly imbued with the spirit of self-sacrifice that my feet ran rapidly along the thorny road I had begun to tread, and no penance or mortification appeared too hard, no amount of self-crucifixion too great to be endured for the atonement of my sins. I was a dupe, a slave, a

captive—a captive under a yoke most cruel and despotic, because it fetters and binds the affections, and tramples on the purest and holiest ties of our social being. Through the false zeal and blind fervor which then actuated me, I had learned to overcome everything which was repugnant to me; and instead of shrinking from those things naturally offensive to me, I began to seek them.

My superiors soon became satisfied that my vocation for the religious life was from God, and the mother held me up to the novices as a model of simplicity, humility, and docility. Finally, on the 1st of January, 1863, my hair, extending in length below my knees, and of which I was once very proud, was shorn from my head, and I was clothed in the brown habit of the novice, receiving the name of Sister Teresa de Chantal, by which I was thenceforth to be known. Oh, I can never forget the awful solemnity of my feelings on that never-to-be-forgotten New Year's Day, when I put off the old and familiar scenes of life, and embraced the new and unfamiliar austerities of an untried experience. And oh! how often during that day would come the harrowing reflection—Home and mother, lost, lost to me for ever! Never again to enter that hallowed circle! Never again behold its loved ones! Never again to make the walls ring with my girlish joy! Never again to listen to the sweet voice of my mother, as it breathed its melody in my poor lonely ear! But this was a vain and futile shrinking; alas! I had deliberately consigned myself to an inevitable destiny, and no power can avert it now. I had, as I thought, laid myself down for ever at the feet of Jesus, to become His bride, and live like Him while on earth—poor, despised, and self-sacrificing; henceforth only subject to the will of those appointed to rule over me. I had placed my hand to the plough, there must be no turning back; only by preserving to the end could I hope to save my soul. Little did I dream, when entering on this dark and tortuous path, whither it would conduct me.



## CHAPTER IV.

## RULES AND DAILY ROUTINE OF THE SISTERS.

BEFORE I proceed further with my experience, I will briefly portray the daily routine of a Sister of Charity according to the rules. At the first stroke of the bell, which rings at half-past four in the morning, every nun rises hastily from her bed, falls prostrate and kisses the floor. Should a nun fail to rise at the first sound of the bell, even if ill or indisposed, she is reported to the superior and required to do penance as for a great crime. Sisters are lauded for reporting the shortcoming of each other. All dress in silence, and make their beds in one half-hour.

At five o'clock another bell is rung, and all repair to the community-room, or chapel, for prayer. After some vocal prayers to the Blessed Virgin, and the invocation of saints, the morning meditation is then read. The meditation is generally divided into three points, each point mentioning some subject of contemplation; each as the sufferings of souls in purgatory, or some circumstance in the life of the Blessed Virgin, or saints; and during Lent, on the passion of CHRIST—the meditation is made on the knees, the body being kept erect and motionless. This position, for an hour, is very painful, and it often happens that many of the nuns faint before the exercise is over. The meditation concludes with a prayer to the Blessed Virgin in the following words: "We fly to thy patronage, O holy mother of God; despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all danger, O ever-glorious and Blessed Virgin! Amen." The nuns then kiss the floor, and the bell rings for mass. At the mission convents the nuns attend the parish church.

After mass the nuns assemble in the refectory for breakfast, which, if not a fast day, consists of beefsteak, bread, coffee, etc. On fast days there is but one meal a day. Silence is always observed in the refectory during meals, while one of the sisters reads aloud from the lives of the saints; the priests and superiors, however, give permission for talk and recreation whenever they feel like it. After breakfast, the nuns repair to their different duties until nine o'clock, when the bell rings for school.

At half-past eleven the sisters and pupils kneel in prayer and examination of conscience until twelve o'clock, when school is dismissed and dinner served. This is, if not a fast day, a meal of soup, roast meat, vegetables, and bread, with porter, ale, etc. The one meal allowed on fast days consists of potato or cabbage soup seasoned with salt, also a piece of bread without butter. After dinner there is a short recreation till one o'clock, when the nuns again engage in teaching.

At half-past three all say the rosary or beads, litany of the saints, etc., and school is dismissed; the nuns then go to the church or chapel for one hour's adoration of the consecrated wafer, or, as it is called, the "Blessed Sacrament." Supper is served at five o'clock.

Any observation or inquiry respecting the health or absence of nuns is prohibited. The rules wisely forbid the nuns to ask unnecessary questions, and two nuns must not talk together alone; there must always be a third party present. Sisters are permitted to visit the sick and prisoners during the spare time from their devotional exercises, before or after school; however, none must be out after six o'clock in the evening, and a sister must always have a companion when in the street.

At half-past six the sisters listen to reading from Rodriguez's "Christian Perfection," or the "Conferences" of St. Vincent de Paul, until seven o'clock; they then have recreation for one hour, which time they must

spend in laughing and talking, whether they feel like it or not.

At eight o'clock the bell rings for Chapter, which I will try to explain as follows: The superior sits and listens to the accusations or confessions of the sisters, which each one makes on her knees in the following manner, "My sister, I accuse myself of having walked too heavily; of making too much noise in shutting the doors; of giving my eyes too much liberty; of running down stairs too fast; of not rising at the first sound of the bell in the morning; of eating between meals; of kissing a little infant for its beauty. I spent too much time in the parlor; also conversed too long with Father So-and-so. For these and all other sins which I cannot call to mind, I humbly beg a penance, and also request my sisters to point out to me the faults which they may have observed in me, contrary to our holy rules." Penances are then inflicted by the Mistress of the Chapter, according as she likes or dislikes them, and if she is actuated by jealousy or envy, she will keep the sisters on their knees one hour at a time, while she will unjustly accuse them of faults which they never committed. (Sisters sin with impunity against the direct commands of God without reprehension, while the least insignificant offense against the rules and customs is punished with severe penance.)

After Chapter they join in vocal prayers from the prayer book. The lights are then extinguished, and all retire to their different cells. (Chapter nights sisters retire about 11 o'clock.) The superior often dispenses with the rules and gives refreshments to the priests, when they often linger until the "wee sma' hours."

Nuns are obliged to go to confession every Friday to a priest appointed by the Bishop. The rite of confession affords the fathers great freedom to accomplish the purposes they may entertain. Seated in the Confessional, priests are empowered to propound questions which from the lips of others would be deemed flagrant insults; kneeling before him, a sister must listen to and answer

questions which fire a pure soul with indignation, and are calculated to destroy every feeling of modesty, which is the handmaid of chastity and woman's most beautiful gift. Auricular confession in the Roman Catholic Church is the underlying element which gravitates to the priest as its center.

The Confessional is a spiritual court of justice; the priest is God's legate; he hears the accusations of the soul in its own condemnation; he is minister-plenipotentiary to the Omnipotent. Confession produces deleterious effects upon the soul of woman through the undue persuasion of priests working upon her sensitive scrupulosity and the excessive intensity of her nature. After her mental strength has been drawn to the proper point, she is irrevocably in his priestly toils. Oh, how much of this is carried on and buried in the cesspool of the Confessional! Sisters are obliged to regard the voice of their confessor with as much credence as if Christ Himself addressed them; therefore no limit is placed to their confidence until they are victimised by the black-hearted betrayer.

In the convent superiors and officers are elected by vote. There are factions and party feelings. The defeated party are jealous of the triumphant; consequently it becomes a hell of contention, strife, and envy. Sadly do they mistake who think nuns are free from the evil susceptibilities of human frailty. Neither is it to be wondered at that many of them become hardened hypocrites by thus living in direct opposition to the best part of their nature, while many others become the sorrowing victims of convent wrongs. Oh, how many gifted and talented young minds are pining away in their prison cells without the courage to escape such a life of mockery! In a youthful enthusiasm they made their choice; and they must abide by it until death claims them as his own.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE VOW OF POVERTY.

I SHALL now proceed to show the obligation of nuns as bound by the vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience. A sister is bound by the vow of poverty to have no dominion, no property, and no use of any temporal thing without licence from a superior; hence, two things necessarily follow; first, that the vow of poverty obliges a nun not to possess, or take, or receive, any temporal thing, in order to keep, make use of, or dispose of it, in any manner whatsoever, without leave of the superior. Second, that a sister acts contrary to her vow of poverty, not only when without permission she takes, retains, or in any manner disposes of anything that belongs to the community, but likewise when she accepts of anything from persons abroad, though they be parents or friends, without the consent of the superiors, from whom it is a sacrilege to conceal anything: therefore no limit is placed to the despotism of superiors who selfishly monopolize all things for the advancement of the order.

A sister commits a most grievous sin if she violates the most trivial obligation of her vow of poverty; for instance, if a sister, without leave of a superior, should give to another a picture, book, flower, pin, or needle, she would sin morally; because the act of giving it away would show she had been proprietor of it. Neither can a nun, without licence, take a book out of the library, or anything out of the wardrobe, refectory, or any other place, without acting in direct opposition to the vow of poverty. If a friend should send to a nun



any delicacy, or any memento of friendship, the superior will take it from her and give it to another; for it is as much for one as another, and every member of the community may claim it equally. As St. Austin says, in relation to the vow of poverty, as observed by religious orders, "If anyone should have anything given him and he should conceal it from his superior, he is guilty of theft." St. Basil is of the same opinion when he says, "For a religious to possess anything as an individual, without the superior's consent, is theft." Hence, as taught by the most eminent doctors of the Romish Church, it is clear that a nun who receives or keeps anything in private is guilty of theft and sacrilege. A nun cannot give a crust of bread to a starving beggar without first going down on her knees to ask the permission of a superior, which rarely is ever granted. The vow of poverty requires the nun to give up not only all claims to earthly possessions, but all claim to herself, thus binding her, soul and body, to the service of the community and to the will of the superiors.

In order to have complete control over the beclouded minds of subjects, wily superiors will draw on their fears and imaginations by relating frightful examples which God made of those *religieuses* who violated their vows. In order to illustrate the ignorance and blind superstition of the nuns, I will select a few examples from the "Christian Perfection" of Alphonsus Rodriguez, Spanish Jesuit, which is daily read to Sisters of Charity and Jesuits, Rodriguez says: "We read in the chronicles of St. Francis that there was a brother in one of the convents of his order who knew how to read a little, and, desirous to learn more, found means of procuring himself a Psalter. But as St. Francis' rule prohibited all lay-brothers to learn to read, the father guardian, understanding he had got this book, asked him for it. He

answered that he had it not; the guardian pressed him to tell where he had put it, and showed him that to live proprietor of anything was to live in a continual breach of his vows; yet the brother would not hearken to what he said, nor obey him. Not long after this he fell dangerously sick, and the guardian, for fear he should die in that state, commanded him, in virtue of holy obedience, to restore the book or tell him where he had hid it, but this unhappy man, being hardened in his sin, died without declaring anything. The night after he was buried, when the sacristan rang to matins, he saw a frightful ghost coming suddenly towards him; and hearing a melancholy, mournful voice, without being able to understand anything distinctly, he was seized with such fear that he fell down as if dead. The religious, having heard the first peal of matins, wondered why the bell did not ring again, and after having waited a little, they went to the church and found the sacristan lying along as a dead man, who coming to himself, told them what had happened. After they had begun to sing matins, the same ghost appeared again, crying and howling out lamentably, but did not utter any word so clearly as to be understood. The guardian, to encourage his religious, who seemed very much affrighted, commanded the spirit in the name of God to tell who he was, and what he wanted there. To whom it replied, I am the lay-brother whom you buried yesterday. Then the guardian asked him if he stood in need of the prayers of the religious, to whom he answered, no, for they could do him no good as he was eternally damned on account of the book which he had kept in his possession at the hour of his death. Since, therefore, replied the guardian, we cannot do you any service, I command you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to depart hence immediately, and return no more



to disturb us. These words were scarcely uttered when the ghost disappeared and was never seen after."

Examples like the above are daily quoted from the writings of so-called saints, calculated to engender the most rank ignorance and superstition. Oh, what duplicity is here practised by those in authority upon the darkened minds of their unfortunate dupes who accept these lying legends with as much avidity as prattling little child accepts the fables of the "Arabian Nights."

## CHAPTER VI.

## VOWS OF CHASTITY AND OBEDIENCE.

THE two vows known as Chastity and Obedience will doubtless prove startling to those to whom Jesuitical casuistry and doctrine are unknown pursuits of study. A nun breaks the vow of chastity by looking a man in the face; she must not raise her eyes when speaking to one of the opposite sex; she must not touch a sister's hand or habit, or allow herself to be touched by another. If allowed to see a father or brother, she cannot take his hand; she must renounce all curiosity, never look around her, nor through a window, nor towards a door when opened to see who enters. She must walk in the cloister and street with downcast eyes, never showing a sign of recognition to an acquaintance. If she should happen to meet her own father, mother, sister, or brother upon the street, she must pass them by as if she knew them not.

Should a pupil linger beside a sister longer than is necessary, the sister is reported to the superior as being too familiar with the children. On account of my natural cheerfulness of character I was a particular favorite with the children and scholars in general, consequently my pupils were very affectionate towards me, often manifesting their love by taking my hand, encircling my waist, sitting at my feet, kissing my habit, etc., whereupon I would be reported as guilty of great impropriety because I would venture to show my affection towards some gentle girl whose sunny smile would cheer my sad and isolated heart, which seemed perishing for love and sympathy. I was thus forced to recoil from their innocent demonstrations of love as from a serpent's touch, which, if I failed to do, I would be reported by the spies of the community who are ever on the alert.

Should a sister's thoughts go out into the world, or should her mind overleap prescribed limits, especially with reference to a priest, she must make known that thought at the Confessional. In other words, should a sister fall in love with a priest she is bound to tell him of it, and obtain his advice about it.

A nun is bound to accuse herself of all things relating to chastity; must disclose any temptation, thought, word, or deed—nay, less than that, a dream, a vision against purity must be minutely described to the confessor. Here note the infamous craft of these regulations: A young girl being bound by her rules to disclose every impulse of her nature to her confessor—the priest thus informed can take advantage of her as he may feel inclined. Sometimes policy will induce him to express a holy horror at the offense with a view to exalting his sanctity, especially if he have an aversion for the penitent, or should deem her an unsuitable subject for his purposes. On the other hand, should his evil heart suggest to him the moral destruction of this sister, how great the facility he possesses for its accomplishment. In the book of the "Conferences," St. Vincent directs that a priest shall not be permitted to enter the apartment of the sisters. "The devil," he remarks, "is always at work, and even angels have fallen"; yet she may remain in the confessional for any length of time alone with her confessor, and she may confess to him in his own room in case of his indisposition. The priests often enter the rooms of the superiors, and remain there for a considerable time; nor is anyone permitted to open the door or enter the room during their stay. When a priest enters the room of a superior, or officer, should a private sister be present at the time, she is told to withdraw at once; nor is anyone allowed to enter while he remains.

Various injunctions and examples, as the following, are daily read to the nuns. St. Alphonsus Liguori says, "A deliberate glance at a person of a different sex enkindles an infernal spark which damns the soul." St. Clara

would never look in the face of a man. She was greatly afflicted because she once involuntarily saw the countenance of a priest. (There are not many St. Claras in the convents of the 19th century!)

By the vow of Obedience, a sister is obliged to give up not only her will but also her judgment, reason, and conscience. Her superior, oftentimes a woman of inferior intellect, ignorant, superstitious, and domineering, cannot be addressed except upon the knees of the nun; she must kneel at her feet, and listen to her commands as coming from the mouth of God. A sister must obey promptly the first sound of the bell which calls them to the different exercises of the day and night, and instantly drop everything she is engaged in. Even if writing she must leave a letter half-formed. A nun must obey blindly, *i. e.*, obey without reasoning on any point, and submit will and understanding to a superior; therefore, she must submit indiscriminately to everything commanded, though that which is commanded should even be criminal. This obedience is called perfect because it obeys without discussion or examination; hence, a sister in the observance of obedience must be as a dead body which sees not, answers not, complains not, nor has any perception; she must have no eyes to observe curiously her superior's actions; must make no reply to the prescriptions of obedience, no matter whether they be criminal, repulsive, or absurd. A sister must obey as if she had no feeling; accordingly, she must be in the hands of superiors like a staff which is taken in the hands to walk with. A staff goes wherever it is carried; it has no motion but what it receives from the hand that controls it. A sister must be the same; she gives herself into the hands of her superiors, to do with as they like. St. Alphonsus Liguori, in the "Nun Sanctified," says: "If a nun receives a command which is criminal, it is better to obey, because the responsibility of the sin commanded will rest upon the superior, who gave the command." When a sister receives a command from her superior, or confessor, she is taught to believe that she is more certain of doing the will of God in obeying her

orders than if an angel came down from heaven to manifest His will to her. Her rule says, that obedience is the only sure way that leads to salvation. The vow of obedience is supreme—the voice of the superior is the voice of God; therefore, if any command clashes with the vow of chastity, or any other obligation, the vow of obedience must have the supremacy.

A nun is in the greatest danger of moral death who thus gives herself to the guidance of passive and blind obedience. Her conscience is stifled; she must not trouble herself about the sin or its consequences, when she is bound to think the *vow of obedience* the only way to heaven. Oh, what blasphemy! what delusion! May the blessed light of the Son of God shine upon their poor misguided souls, and let fall from their darkened eyes the scales of error, and give them to know and feel that Jesus is the *only* way, the truth, and the life. Such is the earnest prayer of my heart for all deluded children of superstition. None, save those who, like myself, have been groping in the black wilderness of Romanism, and at last have found deliverance by the light of Jesus, can know what it means.

## CHAPTER VII.

A MISSION TO ST. JOSEPH'S CONVENT AND ORPHAN ASYLUM  
IN PATERSON, N. J.

I HAVE briefly treated of the vows and regulations of Sisters of Charity in the preceding chapters, in order that my readers can more clearly understand the nature of the obligations enforced upon me by these vows. I will again resume my personal experience. On the 4th of January, 1863, four days after I was clothed in the habit of the novice, I was sent by Mother Xavier to the convent in Paterson, N. J. At the sight of St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum, that cold winter day, my soul was filled with the most conflicting emotions, and I became so overpowered by my feelings that I gave way to a copious flow of tears as I entered the community-room, to present myself to my new companions, whom I will now introduce to the readers, as follows:

Sister Mary Joseph, the sister-superior, was a most stern and unfeeling woman, well calculated to render my novitiate one of unmitigated tyranny. She received me in the coldest of cold manners, and my affectionate greeting to the other nuns was also repulsed by their coldness; they appeared like mere statues, without feeling, without heart. Sister Mary Cecilia, a gentle, sickly young nun, of about twenty-three years of age, who died of consumption a few months afterwards. Sister Gertrude, a weak-minded woman of twenty-six years, was next in office to the sister-superior. Sister Ann Joseph, a cranky, sharp-visaged woman of thirty years, was mother of orphans. Sister Mary de Sales, a German, about twenty-two years of age, who entered the convent when she left the convent school, yet she was so ignorant of all useful studies that she could not read, write, or spell correctly; she was, nevertheless, appointed to teach the orphans. This sister



was one of those weak souls who are always scandalized by their neighbor's faults; consequently, she was the principal spy of the house, always reporting the faults of her companions to Sister Mary Joseph, who commended her for it. Lastly, Sister Mary Gonzaga, another cruel and stern woman of thirty, filled up the number of those uncongenial souls, among whom my desolate and lonely heart was destined to become still more desolate and lonely.

On the morning following my arrival, Sister Mary Joseph promoted Sister Ann Joseph to be housekeeper, and installed me mother of the orphans. This office, to me, was one of the most trying that could possibly be imagined, and no language can express the feelings I experienced when I first beheld these poor children huddled together in a cheerless class-room, without fire, without shoes, bare shoulders, and bare arms, crying and shivering with the cold, presenting altogether the most forlorn and miserable scene I had ever before witnessed. The daily regimen of these poor children was as follows: They rise at six o'clock, hastily dress, and repair to the bath-room, the elder orphans always assisting the younger, because the sisters are forbid touching them. After they are washed and combed, they proceed to a cold class-room for morning prayers, then to scanty and unpalatable breakfast, which without any change, always consists of dry bread and coffee, without milk or sugar, made from the refuse coffee of the sisters' table, sweetened with treacle. The orphans' table is covered with a black greasy oil-cloth; to each child is thrown a piece of bread, which is eaten from the table without a plate; the coffee is served in tin cups. Their appetite is never satisfied on the scanty allowance given them; and they retire from the refectory almost as hungry as when entering it. It is most painful to witness the wistful and yearning glances they cast at the fragrant meats on the sisters' table.

The oldest of the orphans is scarcely twelve years, yet they perform all the drudgery work in the asylum. They

do all their own washing and ironing; scrub the halls; dormitories, class-rooms, and refectories; make beds, sweep, and wash dishes, etc. At half-past eight, A. M., those who are permitted to attend school assemble in the clothes-room, where they divest themselves of their old and tattered clothes, and don the red or green plaid uniforms with which they appear in public. At twelve o'clock they again march, two by two, to the refectory, where they partake of a meal, if possible, more uncomfortable than that of the morning. Their dinner consists of soup made from poor and infected meat thickened with the waxy remnants of the unleavened wafer, and crusts of mouldy bread, portioned out to them in tin cups, from which they eat with discolored pewter spoons. I never saw a plate, or knife and fork, on the orphans' table.

At one o'clock they again go to school, and remain until three, when school is dismissed. After school the uniform is replaced by their old comfortless rags. At five o'clock they have supper which consists invariably of porridge and molasses, and, for a change, porridge and buttermilk. Sometimes the weak little stomachs of these children refused their unpalatable food, and on such occasions Sister Ann Joseph, the housekeeper, would stand over them with a leather strap, called cat-o'-nine tails, and whip them until they ate the nauseous food; or else they were starved until they were glad to eat anything.

I could not refrain from weeping when, on the second day of my arrival, Sister Ann Joseph (their former mother) compelled them to run with bare feet in the snow for one-half hour, and she applied the cat-o'-nine tails vigorously on the bare shoulders of those who stopped or hesitated. This sister ridiculed my tender feelings towards the orphans, telling me I would soon get hardened to such things. I asked her what object she had in thus exposing these poor little ones to such hardships; she replied, "To make them tough and hardy," as she did "not believe in making hot-house plants of orphans"; and she further remarked, that

during the two years she had charge of them she never failed to make them run in that manner twice a week, winter and summer, and that I must enforce the same discipline.

Notwithstanding the severe instructions given me in regard to the government of these forlorn little ones, I resolved to rule them in love and kindness. Their helpless and desolate condition made a deep impression on my mind and called out all the sympathy of my heart. I spoke to them tenderly, and smiled upon them affectionately, and they soon ceased to tremble at my approach. They were in such great fear of the nuns, that the very sight of one would send them, shivering and crouching with terror, out of sight. I assisted the young children in all their necessities; I combed their heads, which, through neglect, were swarming with vermin, and covered with sores and scabs, rendering it the most repulsive office I ever performed; however, with daily combing, and the use of red precipitate, they were in a good condition before three weeks had passed. Every Saturday I bathed their neglected bodies, which were also covered with vermin. This treatment, to which they had been strangers, soon obtained the affection of their little hearts for me, and they would hail my approach with pleasure, every eye beaming with welcome whenever I came near them. They ventured to sit at my feet and by my side, vieing with each other who would come the nearest to me, while I would relate to them little anecdotes as I sat mending their tattered clothes. I was only with the orphans in the morning, before school, and after school in the evening, until the next morning, as I was obliged to teach sixty children in the Parochial school.

But this state of things was not to last always. Sister de Sales, the "reporter," seeing the affection, and, as she called it, undue familiarity which I manifested towards the poor orphans, reported me to Sister Mary Joseph, who called me to account for it, and forbade me allowing the children to come near me. I told these little ones the command I had received from my superior,

at the same time assuring them of my love, and that I would show them all the kindness in my power. I was subjected to the closest scrutiny by the sly Sister de Sales. It was a matter of astonishment to her why I never whipped the orphans, and one day she reported to Sister Mary Joseph, that one of them, named Mary Gray, had told her a falsehood, and ought to be punished severely for it. Accordingly she came to me with an order from Sister Mary Joseph, commanding me to inflict a severe chastisement. I called Mary Gray aside, and chided her for her fault by portraying to her in vivid colors the enormity and hideousness of the sin, and in punishment I told her to go on her knees and ask God to forgive her, which she did very contritely. But the poor child was not to escape so easily; Sister Mary Joseph, who was watching through a side door, strided into the room, and in a fierce manner asked me why I did not obey her orders and punish the child. I replied I had. To which she responded, "I'll teach you how to punish her; you are spoiling these orphans, and soon they will rule the sisters." She then took the child into a cellar, commanding me to follow her. She tied this little child, only about six years old, across a broken chair, stripped off her clothes, and in a merciless manner applied the lash on the tender flesh, which rose in purple stripes at every stroke. Such cruelty I had never before witnessed, and the tears rolled down my cheeks at the sight. But the sight of my emotion maddened her, and turning to me she said, "I'll teach you to get over your fine feelings, and at once!" She then gave me the strap, commanding me to beat the child in the same manner she had. I remonstrated, saying I thought the child was punished enough on that occasion. Whereupon she took up a large clothes-stick, and gave me a blow with it across the shoulder, asking, "Was that the way to practice the vow of obedience, as a superior's orders were not to be questioned, but obeyed blindly?" There was no alternative, I must obey. I took the strap and offering the action to God, for the first time in my life I raised my

hand to inflict pain. Oh! it was a terrible trial; and I can never forget the agony of that day, and the reflections which followed. I had sacrificed all that was sacred to me on earth, and entered a convent, and for what? To labor, as I thought, in the service of the poor and afflicted, and secure the salvation of my soul, aided by the example of meek and holy women; whereas I found them cruel, hardened, and unfeeling. I expected to meet Christian love and kindness, yet a Sister of Charity had struck me a severe blow with a large stick, and compelled me to act inhumanly. Oh, how my spirit resented such treatment, and my soul was filled with bitterness towards that cruel sister. But my conscience reproached me with the sinfulness of entertaining such thoughts against a superior who represented God to me. I humbled myself, and knelt at her feet, confessing the feelings I entertained for her, and which her conduct called forth. I asked forgiveness, and requested her to pray for me that these temptations might leave me. She replied, "She would rather pray for the devil than for me," and ordered me out of her presence.

My heart was convulsed with an unspeakable agony, and my soul was plunged into the dark water of temptation and despair. I retired to my lonely cell, where I seemed to see the outstretched arms of my beloved mother beckoning me with inexpressible tenderness to come to her again and find happiness in her love. Oh, what a temptation was this to my crushed and bleeding heart to forsake the gloomy convent, and fly to my mother; to revolt against the authority of cruel superiors, and break the chains which detained me in that cold and living sepulchre! But the very idea froze my blood, and an invincible terror paralyzed me. What, break my holy vows? cause so much scandal to a Church which had nourished me with so many graces and blessings? become a spectacle to all the world, and an execration to the community? Alas! I had not the moral courage to brave so formidable a disgrace. What, damn my immortal soul? become a traitor to my holy vocation?



I could not, I could not! I must save my soul at every cost. No matter how much and how great were the sufferings inflicted in this life, my reward would be eternal.

Such reflections were a foretaste of the many fearful struggles my heart endured for weary years in the convent. I had of my own free will commenced a life of unnatural warfare against all that was human, every Heaven-bestowed instinct must be repressed and destroyed, no escape from my dreary tomb—I must abide the consequences of that false step and resign myself to my desolate fate, without love, without sympathy, a poor forlorn orphan.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## CONTINUATION OF MY EXPERIENCES.

ABOUT four weeks after the events related in the last chapter, I was one day trying to reach something from the summit of the wardrobe. I was standing on a pine step-ladder, about four feet from the floor. Not being quite able to reach up far enough, I stood on "tip-toe," when the step-ladder suddenly slid from under my feet, precipitating me to the floor, and, as I fell partially upon the steps, they were completely demolished. My back was severely hurt; but no matter about my personal injuries, it was the steps I lamented, because I knew I would get a severe penance for breaking them. Tremblingly I gathered up the fragments of the broken ladder, tremblingly I carried them to Sister Mary Joseph, and tremblingly I knelt at her feet and asked a penance. The words she addressed to me on that occasion are as vividly stamped on my mind as if it were yesterday I heard them. They were such unlady-like expressions, so different from anything I had ever heard before, that I will give them verbatim, "*You great, clumsy, wallowing, floundering flat-fish, it's just like you to destroy everything you touch, and as a penance you will put your lazy back to work and make another pair just like them.*" Had she commanded me to fly in the air, it could not have appeared more difficult to me than to make a pair of steps. I had never in my life performed a carpenter's task of any description; however, *obedience* would not permit me to remonstrate, or offer any excuse or argument, no matter how inexpedient and absurd the command, as "perfect obedience requires a soul without a will, and a will without an intellect." It being Saturday, there was no school, so I had all day to perform this penance at the neglect of every other duty, which I was

obliged to perform before midnight. I called Emma Scanlan, the oldest of the orphans, to my assistance, and sent her into the cellar to find some pine boards, with saw, axe, hammer, and nails, while I repaired to the chapel to ask St. Joseph, who was a carpenter, to teach me how to make the steps; and then, expecting a miracle, I went to my task. But St. Joseph did not come down from heaven to help me as I superstitiously expected. I sawed and hammered, and hammered and sawed, until night, before I succeeded in getting anything together in the shape of steps, and although not so complete as the former, they were quite as substantial. Again I presented myself to Sister Mary Joseph, to know if my workmanship would suit her; but she was determined not to be suited, and notwithstanding the time and labor I had spent trying to obey her unjust commands, she ordered me to put on my bonnet and go out and beg the price of them before supper. This was another deep humiliation to me; however, I succeeded in begging five dollars from the deluded people who are afraid to refuse the "holy sisters" anything. Sister Mary Joseph kept the five dollars for the convent, and the steps I made were in use when I left Paterson, where I suppose they are now kept sacred as a relic of the since rebellious Sister Teresa de Chantal.

One morning in May all the nuns were employed making flower-beds in the garden before school-time. I was busy digging with a little fire-shovel, and while thus engaged a large earthworm was thrown up in my face, causing me to scream. It being the hour of silence, Sister Mary Joseph asked who had broken the rule by screaming. Sister de Sales, ever ready to report, answered that it was Sister Teresa de Chantal. I explained to her the cause, whereupon she ordered me to take up the worm and eat it. I was horrified at this command, and told her I was afraid it would poison me. To which she responded that even if I were sure it would kill me it was my duty to obey, reminding me of St. Catherine of Sienna, who ate worms out of a cancer in a woman's

breast; and saying that, if I ever expected to become a saint, I must imitate their mortification. Naturally I have the greatest abhorrence to any creeping thing, and the very thought of taking it in my hand was unendurable. But to eat it, ugh! disgusting! I had not sooner taken the worm in my hand than, overcome by my sensitiveness, I let it fall with another scream. At this Sister M. J. became exasperated, took the worm, and forced it into my mouth, and made me chew it until I became violently sick.

Christian readers, this is an appalling picture, and perhaps you are ready to ask, Is it not overdrawn? So far from this, believe me, it falls far short of the reality; for no language can describe the scene as it really occurred, or the suffering it occasioned me. To you it may seem absurd and unheard of; nevertheless it is a bitter fact, and I challenge Sister Mary Joseph to contradict it, and she is still in the community of Madison. If Protestants need confirmation of the disgustingly cruel, barbarous penances practised in all convents, let them read the lives of the Romish saints, such as St. Catherine of Sienna, St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, St. Bridget, etc.

I have seen sisters, voluntarily and without any compunction, eat worms and bugs. Sister de Sales always picked out the worms from apples, or any other fruit she ate infected with them, and would come and eat them before me with great gusto, in order that I might take sanctity in such performances. I would have been much more edified and benefited had she set me an example of Christian charity instead of the monstrous excesses she set forth as laudable, under the names of "sanctity" and "holy austerity."

A great number of holy days are observed among the nuns, and on such days the priests spend the time in the convent, recreating with the sisters, without any regard to infringement of the rule, which allows only one hour of the day for recreation. On these days I always managed to steal away to the chapel; but Sister Mary Joseph, to whom my piety was a stumbling-block, forbade me to

act differently from the other sisters, and commanded me to remain at recreation on those days, even if I did not take part. I will relate an incident which occurred on one of these days. A number of priests were spending the afternoon with the nuns, and having a merry time over their wine, ice-cream, cakes, candies, nuts, etc., in the community-room. The floor of this room was bare. A large insect running on the floor attracted the attention of Sister Ann Joseph, who rose from her chair and killed it with her foot, causing a very disagreeable noise, and leaving an ugly stain on the floor. I could not refrain from ejaculating, "Oh, sister, how cruel!" This exclamation attracted the attention of the priests to the act, which they did not appear to have noticed before. Sister Mary Joseph was mortified to have the priests notice the unladylike action of Sister Ann Joseph, and she gave me a look which plainly said, "You will suffer for that." However, the evening passed away without any reprimand; but the next day she sent a child to the school for me, ordering me to her presence at once. I obeyed, and found her in the hen-yard with a large carving-knife in her hand, and a hen tied by the feet. She addressed me thus: "I will cure your sensitive nerves, and teach you never to mortify me by causing priests to notice the faults of the sisters. A mere novice like you to presume to find fault with the professed nuns!" She then bade me take the knife and cut the head off the hen. I took the knife, and commenced to cut the hen's head. The hen began to kick and jump, which caused me to drop the knife and tremble in sympathy with the hen. I told Sister M. it was impossible for me to kill it, because I could not endure to see it suffer. She insisted, and I again tried, but with the same result as before. I tried again and again, and did not succeed till after one hour of the greatest suffering to both hen and myself, as I came near fainting twice during the operation. On another occasion, while I was engaged in arranging some clothes in the linen closet, I caught a mouse in the garment I held in my hand, which

caused me to scream and break the rule of silence. Sister M. Joseph, who was present, made me, as a penance, bite off the head of the live mouse.

I was not the only sister who suffered through the severity of Sister Mary Joseph; for she seemed to take delight in inflicting punishment on her helpless subjects. If the orphans did wrong, or destroyed by accident anything belonging to the house, I was held responsible, and made to suffer accordingly.

It frequently occurred on the Sabbath that Sister Mary Joseph would tell me to array the orphans in their green uniforms for church, and just as they were ready she would enter the class-room, come towards me, and violently strike or push me, demanding to know why I did not "dress them in their red uniforms." I would reply, because she had told me the green. She would then give vent to such invectives as, "You lying, lazy creature, change the green for the red in five minutes, or I'll break every bone in your body," etc. The poor children were obliged to change their clothes in about five minutes to be in time for church, causing the greatest confusion among themselves, and leaving everything in the wildest disorder, and so keeping me busy until noon in restoring things to their proper order.

It was unusual to hear Sister Mary Joseph speak civilly to the sisters; but what a transformation was there in her manner and countenance when she received and conversed with her admiring guests in the parlor! She appeared then all smiles and amiability. To the world she was a saint, a sweet, "holy sister"; behind the scenes, she was a demon, a fierce, arbitrary virago. I will lift the curtain which hides her from the world a little higher.

I was one day obliged to consult her on a matter of obedience relative to the orphans. Fearing lest I should forget it, and incur the penalty of a severe penance, I left my class in the school and hastened to the community-room, where I expected to find her at her post of duty, but she was not there. I noiselessly went to her bed-



room and cautiously opened the door, fearing to disturb her if she should be asleep or indisposed. She was not asleep, but entertaining a reverend father—whose name I will not give, because he is now dead, and I have chiefly to treat with the living, who can defend themselves if I wrong them—in a manner very little in accordance with convent rules, or the idea of a pure young girl who judged all things charitably and thought evil of none. She was enraged at my intrusion, and violently pushed me through the hall and down the stairs. The fall was so severe that I walked lame for over one week. She was afraid I might report her conduct to the other sisters; therefore in the evening she called me to her room, apologized a little for throwing me downstairs, and begged me not to mention to anyone the adventure of the afternoon. Her excuse was that Father D. was suddenly taken very ill while calling on business, and that she insisted upon his resting on her bed, where she could more readily minister unto him. I have given a simple fact, let the mind draw its own inference.

I do not accuse all the sisters of the community of being immoral; no, there are many pining souls, who, like myself, in all sincerity labor to become saints, with the strange fervor which the Roman Church teaches. Therefore, while there are many pure nuns, daily martyrs to their purity of character, an equal number of them are the very reverse. What language can possibly depict the pitiable condition of these poor deluded ones who are the victims of error so dark, and doctrines so fatal and ruinous? Poor creatures, is there no remedy? None; unless the power of God burst their bonds and set them free. From the depth of my heart I thank God that He has set me free at last—free from delusion and superstition; free from priestcraft and tyrannical superiors; free from convent rules and regulations; free from its prison walls, its bad example, and unholy discipline. But it required the deep cut of the chisel, and the hard and heavy strokes of the hammer to sever the chains of my captivity.



## CHAPTER IX.

## SOME ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES OF CRUELTY TO THE ORPHANS.

AN orphan's fate is most desolate under any circumstances, but how much more so it is if these poor waifs are cast entirely among strangers, and especially among those women whose hearts are closed to all domestic love and joy, and where the unrelieved monotony and sterile dreariness of their unnatural mode of living have smothered every vestige of tenderness and compassion, and whose rule and vows oblige them to crush out of their nature every human tie, every womanly impulse, every maternal instinct. What is the fate of orphans entrusted to the care of such beings? Let the following statement of facts determine:—

In the month of March, 1863, in company with Sister Mary Joseph, I attended the dying bed of a poor woman named Mrs. Stanton. Her husband had been killed on the battle-field, and she was compelled to go out washing to support herself and child. Finally her health failed, and she was dying. Troubled about the fate of her dear child, she sent for the Sisters of Charity, and with her dying breath commended her little one to the mercy and care of Sister Mary Joseph, entreating her to be a mother to the orphan, for the sake of Him who saith, "Inasmuch as you have done these things to the least of My brethren, so also have ye done them unto Me." Annie Stanton, the name of this little one, was scarcely three years of age, and was a most lovely and interesting child. Young as she was, she grieved for her mother, and it was truly heartrending to hear her piteous cries of "Oh, take me to my mother! I want my mother! I want my mother! Oh, my mother, my mother!" Ah, poor child, your mother has gone, and no one on earth can ever fill

her place, no matter how kind they may be—nothing can ever supply a mother's love and care.

It is impossible for me to analyze, much less describe, the emotions of my heart, when Sister Mary Joseph handed the newly-made orphan over to my charge to share the same fate as the rest. I trembled to admit that it was not in my power to shield this darling child from suffering, of which the length and depth can scarcely be comprehended. Alas! the unhappy child must soon, like myself, discover the hard truth, that mother and home were gone, gone forever. However, I resolved to alleviate the hardships of this child as much as I possibly could. Annie would go at the appointed time to the refectory, only to leave it with her coarse food untouched. I often, unobserved, shared my own meals with her; but the spy De Sales was ever on the alert, and soon made known to Sister M. Joseph my "partiality"—as she termed it; consequently, I was made to fast on bread and water for one week as penance. Nevertheless, I would on every available occasion from the sisters' table give palatable food to the weak and delicate among the orphans. I was often severely penanced for it.

Every night before I retired custom demanded that I should arouse the younger of the orphans in order to wean them from habits customary with children of their tender years. Some of the little ones were not easily awakened, therefore I would take them in my arms and carry them, contrary to the rules, which forbade sisters to touch them except to inflict correction. One cold night I was caught by De Sales in the awful act of carrying Annie Stanton, whereupon I was of course reported, and Sister Ann Joseph was sent to watch me, and give me instructions in regard to the manner in which I should treat the orphans. The following night Annie Stanton cried at the unusual manner in which she was awakened. Sister Ann Joseph dragged her from the bed, and ordered her to walk on the cold floor. The child, half asleep, refused, and began to call her mother. Touched by this appeal, I went towards the child in

order to coax her. Sister Ann Joseph pushed me back, took off her hard leather shoe, and began to beat her on the delicate flesh, which rose in black and blue ridges at every cruel blow. I could not endure this, but pulled the sister away, asking her if she meant to kill the child, and that if she had, I could not stand there and let her do so. My interference doubly enraged her; she sent another child for the leather strap, placed the little naked body across the bed, and beat that child till the blood came. The shrieks and screams of her victim infuriated this woman, who then seemed the personification of a fiend to such an extent, that in order to smother her cries, she dragged the little one to the bath-room, placed her in the tub and turned a shower of ice-water upon her, keeping her under it until she became so chilled that her body stiffened out as if dead. As a very natural result of such barbarity, a violent fever ensued, which nearly resulted in death. Never can I forget the cries of that suffering child, as she pleaded for mercy from that heartless woman—a woman, too, bearing the name of a “Sister of Charity” and “Mother” to the motherless little ones under her care.

On another occasion Sister Gonzaga took Mary Carrigan, a girl nine years of age, for the trifling offense of picking some gooseberries from the nuns’ garden, and shut her up in a dark closet in the cellar, infested with rats and mice, from eight o’clock in the morning until five in the evening, and when this Sister of Charity went to release her little victim, she found her in an idiotic condition, clinging to the wall, and her little bare feet bleeding and bitten by the rats; this brutal punishment had resulted in transforming that once bright and intelligent child into an *idiot*!

In the fall of 1864, for some slight offense, Sister Mary Joseph beat Mary Gray with so much severity as to cover her naked body with black and blue stripes. This poor child, made desperate by repeated ill-usage, ran away from the asylum; was picked up in the streets,

and taken to the poor-house, where she was discovered, and brought back to the convent.

Sister Ann Joseph beat so unmercifully a child about eleven years of age, named Jennie Carney, that she also ran away, bearing on her body the marks of cruelty. Lizzie Madden, twelve years of age, ran away twice on account of ill-treatment; and when she was captured and brought back the second time, Sister Mary Joseph tied her to a post with a rope, and scourged her most inhumanly. Kitty Rooney, a sweet little child of five years, was obliged to be kept out of sight for two weeks, on account of the way her face was disfigured, by the beating and kicking she received from Sister Gonzaga.

I could relate other instances of the sisters' unkindness and cruelty to the children in the asylum, but I will merely direct the reader's attention to one more. Mrs. Berry, a poor widow, placed her two children in the asylum some time in 1863. These children were named Sarah Ann and Mary Berry. Sarah Ann, the younger, was about three years old. Sister Ann Joseph was infirmarian to the orphans, and she formed a marked dislike for this child, and in every possible way caused her to suffer. One day in January, 1864, Sister Ann Joseph ordered Sarah Ann away from her scanty breakfast to the infirmary in order to give her some medicine. This was a matter of surprise to me, as I knew of nothing ailing Sarah Ann that morning; moreover, she was a very healthy child, never having been ill while in the asylum. In about ten minutes after Sarah Ann left the refectory, and while I was at my breakfast, Emma Scanlon came running for me in breathless agitation, calling, "Oh, sister, sister! come quickly, Sarah Ann Berry is dying." I hastened to the class-room, where I found the child writhing on the floor in mortal agony. On taking her up she immediately expired in my arms. Fifteen minutes had scarcely elapsed after she left the refectory in the glow of health, ere she was a lifeless corpse, her sudden death spreading terror in the hearts of us all. I sent for Sister Ann Joseph, who came into the

class-room extremely pale and agitated. I said, "Sister, what medicine have you given this child? See, she is dead." She authoritatively replied, "I gave her salts—what's that to you? I believe I have charge of the infirmary!" "Yes, sister, but are you sure it was salts you gave her?" looking her steadily in the eye, for I felt a strong conviction that all was not right, as her past repeated unkindness to the little dead child rose up before me.

In a sharp, angry tone she replied, "The child died of the heart disease, and it is none of your business what I gave her," slamming the door violently as she went out. I had the painful task of lying out the little corpse in its pine coffin, and it was conveyed away, four hours after death, to a pauper's grave in the cold earth.

No physician was called in, no investigation made, nor the slightest inquiries permitted to be circulated in regard to the sudden and mysterious death of this poor child. Even her mother would not be permitted to see her until she threatened to report Father M'Nulty, and get her child disinterred, unless he would give her a permit to look again on the face of her dear child, before the grave would hide her away forever from the earthly vision.

I have given plain and true facts with regard to the treatment of orphans in St. Joseph's Asylum in Paterson, facts which would never reach the public if I had not renounced Romanism.

Orphans cannot complain to their friends because they cannot see them alone—a sister is always within hearing. A day is set apart every month for visitors to see orphans, and on that day they are attired in a neat-looking uniform, drilled, and warned in regard to their every word, look, and manner, and if they transgress these injunctions, they know the punishment which awaits them. Orphans are forbidden any communication with the parish children; they are completely walled in with their complaints and pleas from the ears of a bamboozled humanity; and whoever dare to make known those



grievances to the public, let them be anathema, is the voice of the Church of Rome.

I have dared to make known many things, regardless of the curses which Rome may heap upon me, or the violence she may use against me; and in the statements I have made in this chapter relative to the orphans, some of the parties have boldly corroborated them, as the following digression will show.

Having mentioned in some of my public lectures the preceding examples of cruelty to orphans, Dr. John Quinn, the Romish Physician in Paterson, entered into a controversy with me in the papers, endeavoring by falsehood to blindfold the public. He says: "I myself attended the child Sarah Ann Berry for heart disease before she entered the aslyum, and I told her mother she would not live long." I gave a lecture in Paterson, April 22nd, 1870, confronting Quinn with the facts. Mrs. Berry, the mother of the child, and Dr. Quinn were both in my audience. After the lecture she came forward before several witnesses, among them Rev. G. Winans, Rev. M. Dally, Messrs. Turner and Williams, besides a large number of ladies and gentlemen, and embraced me, tearfully thanking me for the kindness I had shown her children. She then and there testified that every word I had said about the treatment of her children was true, and stated that neither Dr. Quinn nor any other doctor ever tended her child for heart disease or any other disease, and that she never spoke to Quinn in her life. She gave further testimony of the cruel treatment her other child, Mary, received from the nuns; and when she took her away from the asylum the sisters retained the good clothes her child had brought to the asylum, and "sent her out of it clothed in scarcely rags enought to cover her," her back and shoulders bearing the marks of many cruel blows. Jennie Carney, one of the orphans whom I mentioned as having run away from the asylum on account of ill-treatment, was also in my audience. She, too, came forward, being then a young girl of seventeen years, and with great affection greeted



me. She publicly testified to the truth of my statements about the orphans.

Thus it is that truth will and must prevail. Dr. Quinn was ignominiously defeated, even by Roman Catholics, and I was vindicated. I challenge Rev. Mother Mary Xavier, or any of her nuns, to refute these facts.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE CONVENT SCHOOL SYSTEM.

THE unkindness of Sisters of Charity to children extends farther than the orphans, as the children of parochial schools can testify. When a child fails in recitation or conduct the rod is called into requisition, and the hands and bodies of those little ones often carry to their parents marks of the sisters' cruel correction. Another mode of punishment is to keep delinquents confined to the classroom from nine o'clock in the morning until six in the evening, without dinner or a moment's recreation; yet the poor parents stand in such awe of the sisters that they dare not complain, for fear of incurring the displeasure of priests, who threaten with excommunication all parents who withdraw their children from the parish school and send them to public schools. This, however, those Roman Catholics sometimes do who prefer their children's advancement to the priest's absolution.

The parochial schools are poorly regulated, and more time is spent in handling beads and saying, "Hail, Mary," than in the regular instruction of the children. Again, these parish schools are entirely under the supervision of the priests, who engage the nuns to teach, and from the contributions of the parish pay to the reverend mother, for each sister's service, the salary of four hundred dollars per annum. It is impossible for the children to advance rapidly in these schools, because they are not properly instructed. It often happens that one sister may have from one hundred and eighty to two hundred children to teach, and sisters are sent to teach who are ignorant themselves. Sister de Sales' class of orphans were one year learning how to spell words of one syllable. The priests spend a great deal of their time in the parochial school, making love to the pretty young nuns, while the

rest of their time is spent in mumbling Latin *offices* drinking wine or "whisky punch," and making merry on the "fat of the land."

NOTE.—In treating of cruelty to children, or the sisters' incompetency to teach, I do not allude to a boarding-school institution, or to the Academy in Madison, or to any select pay-school taught by Sisters of Charity. The sisters do not so far forget themselves, or their Church policy, as to impose cruelties on those children whose parents pay a tuition fee of from two hundred and fifty to three hundred dollars per annum. I will here state that there can be no greater kindness shown to pupils than is bestowed on the children of wealthy parents, and especially those of Protestant parentage who are open to conviction in the way of Romish dogmas. Such pupils are taught well, but not in solid branches of science or history. They appear to aim to give a superficial show of accomplishments, according to the capacity of each pupil, in order that parents may be satisfied; at the same time every exertion is made to win the affections and secure the confidence of those pupils, so that their young minds may be impressed with the alluring doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church.

Seldom do these attempts fail in creating at least a strong facination toward the showy and theatrical forms and ceremonies, which generally possess a peculiar charm for children. And yet Protestant parents send their children to be educated in distant convents, deluding themselves with the silly idea that no attempt will be made to indoctrinate their young minds with Romish errors. Are such parents not aware that the Romish religion is one of exclusive pretentions, accounting all those outside its pale as doomed to eternal damnation; and that sisters are especially bound to use every effort for the conversion of "heretics"? If Protestants are ignorant of this, it is the result of indifference, and it is a most serious fault in them to be so thoughtless as to send their daughters to Roman Catholic convents to

be educated. Is it not a contradiction in itself, this protesting against a creed and espousing it in their children? If Protestant parents consider it necessary to send their children away from home to be educated, are there not hundreds of Protestant schools where every branch of knowledge is taught by intelligent and experienced teachers? Why, then, support Roman Catholic schools in preference to their own institutions? That the Romish seminaries of learning are liberally encouraged and supported by many of the Protestant community is a fact which cannot be denied. And do Roman Catholics support Protestant institutions, either literary or religious? If they have ever given a single cent to found or build up institutions which are Protestant—which they maliciously denounce as “heretic”—it is something altogether unknown to me. Yet Protestants, kind souls, lend Romanists a strong arm to build up and support their peculiar institutions. “Heretics” countenance and support liberally the institution in Madison, and a large number of Protestant young ladies from different parts of the Union have attended it, from its foundation in 1859.

I have been brought to see the unwholesome influence that is exerted over Protestant young ladies who receive their education in that institution. Prodigious efforts are made to impress Popish doctrines upon their tender and susceptible minds; and I can safely say there is not one out of ten who leaves that institution whose mind is not filled with the religious tenets of the Church of Rome. I am acquainted with several young ladies educated at St. Elizabeth’s, and, with few exceptions, they all felt more or less inclined to embrace Roman Catholicism. The nuns are seemingly very mild, amiable, and pleasing in their disposition to Protestant pupils—engaging and winning in all they say and do—and are possessed of all the charms and machinations necessary to initiate themselves in their good graces, and to gain them over finally to Popery.

The sisters will blandly tell Protestant parents that they will make no effort to instil the Roman Catholic

religion in the minds of their children, and that they will be perfectly free to practice the precepts of their own religion. Certainly they do not compel Protestant scholars to study the Romish Catechism, or expound the "Christian Doctrine," yet the pupils must be present at those exercises, and listen attentively to the Romish interpretation. They must also be present at the Mass, and at every Roman Catholic devotion in the chapel, which is hung with pictures, and decorated with beautifully graven images of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of saints and angels, and with everything pleasing to the eye and charming to the senses.

Protestants, look at this! In convent schools your children are denied the blessed privilege of hearing the Bible read, or even of reading their pocket Bibles which were given them when they left their homes. I never saw a Bible in the convent. This question of education is the question agitating the public mind of today in the Roman Catholic effort to deprive the public schools of the Bible. Will Protestant parents still continue the convent education of their children? Will they so thoughtlessly and unwisely hazard the spiritual welfare of their precious children in this way? These facts speak for themselves. I need not make any reflections on them; but I do make an earnest appeal to Protestants to stand by themselves and their principles, and entirely do away with the Roman Catholic education of their sons and daughters. To subject that system to a just and severe investigation, I, as an ex-nun, can assure them, is almost an impossibility.

## CHAPTER XI.

## MY SISTER VISITS ME IN PATERSON.

FIFTEEN long, weary months had passed since I entered the convent, and during that time I had not heard from home or friends. I had written to my parents twice; but every letter sent or received being subject to the inspection of the superiors, I never knew whether my letters had been sent from the convent; and as I had not received any, I had given up all hopes of ever hearing from my home. Although I had offered this trial as a sacrifice to God, still my heart yearned to hear from that dear mother who had so tenderly watched over me in the past, and from whom my insane folly had rendered it for ever impossible to receive comfort again.

Oh, how often my soul struggled against the temptation of despair and remorse at the step I had taken, and from which there must be no looking back! I had no one but myself to blame; my own hand had clasped the chain which I then thought nothing but death could unclasp. Oh, the nights of conflict and anguish, followed by days of outward calmness and apparent conformity, the dissimulation of which was again the subject of remorse! Oh, how keenly I suffered the penalty of my infatuation! Encircled as I had been with the mercies of a bountiful God, I had cast them all from me to follow a path which He never marked out for any of His creatures.

Inexperienced, simple-minded, and enthusiastic, I had fallen an easy prey to the sophistries of my spiritual guide, to whom I entrusted implicitly every sacred feeling and aspiration of my young heart, and who so skilfully tampered with the ardent impressions and fervent elements of my nature as to cause them to



assume the unnatural proportions of religious fanaticism. Oh, the pernicious influence of confession, that terrible arm of priestcraft; that diabolical device for seduction! that subtle means of piercing the most sacred secrets, and keeping in chains the weaker sex. Extreme conscientiousness has always been my characteristic. It had been the moving principle of my entrance on conventual life. Sincerely anxious to save my soul, and infatuated by the belief that I could not do it in the outer world, I had placed myself on the altar of self-immolation—self-atonement. Being possessed of more than a common degree of fervor, nothing in the shape of self-denial had daunted me—nay, it had rather subtly fed my spiritual pride. Self-glorified by the great sacrifices I had made of my home, my friends, and my relations, for the sake of self-satisfaction, I felt that I must finish the work I had begun and endeavored to forget them; that being entirely disengaged from all earthly things, I might think of nothing else but my soul's salvation. And at that time I was deluded with the thought that the greater sacrifice I made the more it pleased and glorified God. Despite the efforts to forget the things that were behind, long-buried memories would awake as if in mockery of the robe of stoicism in which I was seeking to envelop myself, and in defiance of the barriers which events had been erecting about me. The convulsive sobs and deep-drawn sighs which these memories prompted declared me to be clothed still in all the panoply of human weakness, of human love, and of human desires; earthly affections only slumbered, to be awakened into new life on the slightest occasion.

It was the feast of the Epiphany, January, 1864. Sister Mary Joseph met me in the hall, and in a sharp tone ordered me to go to the parlor, and stay just ten minutes. These were the only words she condescended to address to me, and I, thinking some lady of the parish wished to see me in regard to her children, and I was restricted to a ten minutes' interview as a trial of obedience, proceeded to the parlor. But oh! how can I

picture my surprise to meet there, my sister Gertrude? In my joy, forgetting every restraint, every obligation of rule which forbids the sisters to make any demonstration of affection on meeting their relatives, I threw my arms around her neck and kissed her fondly, holding her for several moments to my throbbing heart. I was entirely overcome by this sudden and unexpected meeting of a sister dearly loved. Before I could control my feelings sufficiently to inquire about home the ten minutes had expired. I could not endure the thought of parting with my sister so soon, therefore I hastened to Sister Mary Joseph, and on my knees begged her to grant me a little extension of the time in which to see my sister. She refused to grant me a single minute more. I then asked her if she would not, at least, send some refreshment to her, as she was very weary after her long journey from Rhode Island, of nearly three hundred miles, and besides, she had had considerable difficulty in finding me, having gone first to Madison. This little act of Christian charity she refused on the plea that she could go conveniently to a restaurant, as there were plenty of such places in the city. She sharply told me I ought to be very grateful for the favor of seeing my sister at all, and that she would not have granted it if she could have denied my "proud sister," who steadfastly refused to go away without seeing me. Language is powerless to describe the overwhelming grief I felt in being forced to turn away that sister without another word, even without a caress. Oh, God, what a trial! Fifteen months without a word from those I so dearly loved—without seeing one dear familiar face! and then at last, when my sister comes to see me, sent by dear parents who were anxious to know my fate, I, after all her long journey to a strange place, am obliged to send her away, powerless to offer her even the least act of courtesy or kindness—to send her away without having the time to communicate a single message of love for my darling mother, or even inquire about her, while my poor heart had so many questions to ask about home, and how each had borne

my long absence from them. My sister, who was very unfavorably impressed by the unkindness of Sister Mary Joseph, asked me if I was happy among such vulgar companions. With convent dissimulation I was forced to reply in the affirmative, for was not a nun in the hall listening to every word we uttered? With a heavy heart I closed the door on my sister Gertrude, and, unable longer to restrain my deep emotion, hastened to the chapel to offer my bleeding heart anew on the altar of sacrifice. The short visit of Gertrude recalled all the anguish of my separation from home, and the strangely cruel manner of her reception at the convent added more keenly to my sorrow. When my sister, in her independent way, requested to see me, Sister Mary Joseph who loved adulation, thought she was not as respectful to her as she ought to be to a Sister Superior. She refused her the privilege of seeing me under the plea that it was not in accordance with the "holy rules" of the convent for novices to be distracted from their "holy vocation" by having intercourse with their relatives: because it retarded their advancement in the way of perfection by keeping their affections fixed on earthly ties, when they should be completely detached from their relatives and the world. Gertrude, who had very little faith in the conventual life, very haughtily replied—"Madam, I do not especially care for your 'holy rules,' but I *do* care about my sister, and I *insist* upon seeing her. My parents received three or four letters from the Mother Superior assuring them that she was very happy in the convent, yet, as they have never received a letter direct from herself since she left home, they became very anxious about her, therefore they sent me to see her, and, madam, I MEAN TO SEE HER! and if you place any obstacles in my way I shall call the law of the land to my aid." Sister M. Joseph, seeing that my sister was a very determined woman, who would not be imposed upon, consented to the interview, but gratified her own revenge by shortening the time to ten minutes. Sister Mary Joseph was afterwards severely reprimanded

by Mother Xavier for her inhospitable and discourteous treatment of my sister. Oh, how my nature rebelled against this system, which, without any cause, took delight in inflicting pain! Where could my struggling, trembling soul find shelter? Not in God, for I had no light to seek Him alone; but after a severe conflict I at last seemed to find a temporary shelter under the subtle charms of spiritual pride.

## CHAPTER XII.

## MY PROFESSION AND MISSION TO JERSEY CITY.

My novitiate lasted one year and seven months, five months less than was usually required, on account of the perfect docility I had shown to arbitrary superiors, and my resignation to the many severe trials imposed upon me. On the 16th of July, 1864, I was summoned to the mother-house, in Madison, to take the irrevocable vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. I entered on a retreat of eight days, and in silence and retirement prepared myself for the coming of the heavenly Bridegroom, whom my fertile imagination had clothed in the fairest of human colors.

On the 25th of July, 1864, in my twenty-second year, I was clothed in the black habit and received the black veil of the professed nuns, and pronounced the final vows which espoused me to HIM whom the angels serve, and cut me off entirely from the world. In making these vows I had offered to God a perfect holocaust, meritoriously renouncing riches by my vow of poverty; my body and all my earthly affections by my vow of chastity; and my will, judgment, reason, and liberty by the vow of obedience. These vows were a second baptism, a sacrifice so heroical and excellent that Saint Bernard calls it a "glorious martyrdom." It is indeed a continual martyrdom; the martyrdom of a religious is not ended by one blow, it is a long suffering daily revived. It is a martyrdom which God rejects because it places self-righteousness on the mediatorial throne from which the *One Mediator* is ejected. And oh, what a naked, unsubstantial, comfortless atonement is here offered to an outraged God.

I had taken upon myself this continual martyrdom, and at every cost I would be faithful to my obligations,



and scrupulously exact in the observance of my vows. I had forecasted the difficulties and anticipated the requirements these vows enforced; nevertheless, inasmuch as it is impossible fully to foresee the future of any state of existence, because of the changes which we ourselves undergo, and much less calculate all the phases presented by the conventual state to the every-varying human heart, I did not foresee the intricate paths and heart-wringing suffering which would eventually lead me out of the meshes of delusion into the broad day of religious liberty.

After my self-immolating profession I was permitted a few weeks of vacation in Madison; from whence, on the 15th of August, 1864, I was sent, in company with Sisters Josephine and Agnes, to establish a convent in St. Joseph's Parish, Jersey City, N. J. My heart was oppressed with a sad foreboding of great and unforeseen trials, when I arrived at my destination that sultry August day. "Future events cast their shadows before." Was it not a foresight of the bitter heartaches, the fierce conflicts, the wild temptations, the awful despair, which awaited me there, that cast such an undefined dread over my soul that day.

Father Venuta, pastor of St. Joseph's Church, had everything in readiness for our reception. Our task of establishing a new parish school was not an easy one. The nuns had never been there before, therefore it required a great deal of perseverance and patience to gather the children together. However, on account of the daily increase of our school, we were obliged to send to Madison for another nun. Sister de Sales was sent to us. Sister Josephine was the appointed sister-superior. She was another edition of Sister Mary Joseph. Sister Agnes was a novice, and of her trials I will speak in another chapter. I was next in authority to Sister Josephine, and I soon became the popular favorite with the children and the people; from which cause I suffered a great deal through the jealousy of Sister Josephine.

I never witnessed so much squalor and misery as I saw in that parish. My heart ached for those poor



priest-ridden people, and questioned in secret why there was no remedy? I visited them in sickness and affliction, in their poverty and misery, in the jail, and in their comfortless abodes. I have often cleaned their shanties when the women were ill or intoxicated, and in every way I tried to relieve their misery as far as lay in my power. Father Venuta, their pastor, was a passionate Italian, who never visited his *poor* people except on his never-ending begging expeditions. On the rich, however, he lavished his priestly services. He not only begged money himself from his *poor* parishioners, but he also sent the nuns to beg it for him; he would often say to me in his peculiar style, when he wanted me to beg: "Ho yoo are sooch a goode seesther, and the people does like the leetle seesther, and they weel geeve yoo plenty of mooney."

My heart often refused to take money from the poor people, who would give me their last cent rather than refuse the "Holy Sister." I have always found the ignorant and poor more willing to give to the priests and nuns than the rich, who, as a general thing, are more enlightened. Priests are dressed in purple and gold vestments when they say mass, and they are attired in the best of broadcloth on other occasions, while those from whom they extort the means for their luxury, are in rags. Roman Catholics build up gorgeous, magnificent, costly churches; they build up elegant houses for their clergymen, and furnish them with every modern comfort and luxury, while their own poor shanties are bare and comfortless. They are burdened with a tax in their priesthood without deriving any real good from it for themselves.

A priest will not even say mass for the poorest among his flock unless he receives one dollar. In England the priests charge half-a-crown for each mass; and in the flourishing colonies of Australia, priests will charge for each mass ten shillings. Priests receive one dollar for each mass they say during the year in the United States; and sometimes they have so many "inten-

tions, "that they sell them to each other. By an "intention," I mean the arrangement made by a priest with a parishioner to say mass for him, or his departed friends. Now, suppose a Mr. McNulty should give Father Venuta fifty dollars and request him to say fifty masses for his soul, perhaps in the week or month following, the priest might have one hundred persons apply in the same manner; these masses, or "intentions," which he could not say, he would sell to other priests. A priest can only say one mass in a day; yet he is often paid for more masses than he can say in one year. If he is honest he will sell them to some priest who has not so many applications. But what guarantee has the applicant that the masses are ever said?

The mass is "the unbloody sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ, and the daily oblation of Calvary." Now, if the mass is so very holy, why are priests paid for all they say? and why do they even peddle them around for sale? Priests will extort money in every way from their blinded followers, and then in their necessities abandon them to die of starvation—which they often would were it not for the humane charities of Protestants, whom, as heretics, they are taught to despise, and believe them condemned to eternal damnation.

My dear Roman Catholic readers, I now look pityingly upon you, as I was once in the same condition myself. I did not lose my faith in the purity of the Roman Catholic Church without a fearful struggle. I would gladly have your eyes open to the truth of what I state as facts, in order that your daughters and sisters may escape sufferings like those of Sister Teresa de Chantal. Tear down the false staging which keeps from you the true worship of Christ. I desire you all to be saved through Christ alone.

In the Roman Catholic Church the worship of Christ is behind the theatricals of gaudily-dressed priests, incensed sanctuaries, ornamented images of the Virgin Mary, beautiful pictures, frescoed paintings, wondrous statuary of imaginary saints and martyrs, rosaries,

scapulars, medals, relics, and Agnus Deis, with their accompanying indulgences; and associated with entrancing music, fragrant flowers, lighted candles, gorgeously-dressed altars, surpliced acolytes, blessed ashes, holy water, consecrated wafers, holy oil and chrism. There are also the Pagan ceremonies of extreme unction, absolution, confession, satisfaction, besides the Lenten fasts, and days of abstinence, genuflexions, and stations of the cross, the crozier, and mitres with the pontifical high mass decorations, Latin liturgies, illuminated missals, gold and silver ciboriums, ostensoriums, and chalices, candelabras and vases, crosses and precious stones, costly laces, fine linens, and the royal purple, with numerous minor forms and ceremonies. All these, my Roman Catholic readers, before you can get to Christ. You say, "But we are not worthy to go to Christ, so we send to Him His holy mother, and His saints, and His holy priests." Now, Christ invites us all to come to Him in truth and humility; and, in order that we might go to Him the more readily, He clothed Himself in our lowly humanity. We all have one great boon to procure—our soul's salvation. If we are truly desirous of securing it we will not trust it to an ambassador, no matter how trustworthy, but we will go ourselves to the Fountain of Life, Christ Himself, then we will be sure that we will not be deceived. I never realized the truth of God until I had completely torn down the false staging which hid Him from me. But, oh! the unutterable anguish, the fearful desolation of spirit I experienced, in the awful tearing away of my once venerated faith! I now thank God in my innermost heart for my wonderful deliverance. I am now covered with His righteousness. I am no longer the same; Jesus is now my only refuge. Adored Lord! increase my faith, perfect it, crown it. Having drawn me from the *pit*, and borne me at last to Thy true fold, keep me in Thy sweet pastures, and lead me to eternal life.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## SISTER AGNES, SHE LEAVES THE CONVENT.

SISTER AGNES had been in the novitiate about six months when she came with us to Jersey City. Her name in the world was Teresa McGehan; her friends were wealthy, and resided in Brooklyn, L. I. She was very beautiful; her face had a power of most varied expression, with a touch of pathetic sadness that penetrated my heart and caused me to become deeply interested in her. She had been engaged to be married to one whom she loved with all the intensity of her nature; but death deprived her of the beloved one, and a hue as of the grave rested upon her young life. She came to the convent to seek balm for her anguished heart and rest for her troubled spirit. Poor deluded one! The dull, monotonous life of a nun was not adapted to her warm, susceptible, sensitive nature, and she soon realized the bitter truth. Sister Josephine subjected Sister Agnes to the deepest humiliation—she compelled her to work in the kitchen, scrub the floors, and perform all the hard and menial offices in the house. Sister Agnes possessed a powerful self-will, strengthened as it had always been by her friends, who had never thwarted her in the most trifling caprice—consequently, she was unable to yield her will in submission to the cruel demands of a superior who was in every way her inferior, and so against the unjust demands of Sister Josephine she frequently rebelled. Her friends often visited her, but she was never permitted to see them alone. They would send her delicacies which were never given to her, and every movement of hers was watched and reported by the spy, Sister de Sales. Sister Agnes frequently confided to me the great interior trials she suffered, and how frequently she was tempted with uncharitable thoughts against some of the nuns. She often

gave expression to the following words: "Sister, God forgive me; but I *hate* Sister de Sales with all my heart, and as for Sister Josephine, I despise her." I counselled her to bear all trials patiently for her soul's sake, and that the grave would soon come to our relief, and our reward would be eternal.

One day Sister Josephine commanded her to carry a large basket of clothes downstairs. Sister Agnes replied they were too heavy to carry alone, whereupon Josephine undertook to assist her, at the same time pushing the basket against Sister Agnes, causing her foot to slip from the steps, and she was violently precipitated to the bottom of the stairs. Sister Agnes fainted, and remained several hours as if dead. She was unable to leave her bed for one week, and was constantly spitting blood in large quantities. This cruel outrage towards Sister Agnes fired my soul with indignation, and I threatened Sister Josephine that I would write about her to Father McQuade\* and inform him of her cruel treatment of Sister Agnes, whom she came so near killing. My threats enraged her to such an extent that she slapped me on the face with her large masculine hand. I turned to her my other cheek, which she also slapped, and in her fury she pulled off my veil and dragged me along the hall by the short hair of my head. I knew not how her rage would have terminated if she were not at that moment called down to the parlor to see a Father Senez, the ex-Jesuit and pastor of St. Mary's Church, Jersey City, who was deeply enamoured with charming Josephine, who never exhibited her temper before him; to him she was "*Son idole, la belle Josephine.*" When a few hours afterwards I entered the cell of Sister Agnes, I found her weeping convulsively. She told me she had decided to leave the "convent hell," even if her soul should be damned by the action—she could not longer endure such

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\*Father McQuade was at one time Father Superior over the Sisters, and President of Seton Hall College, in South Orange, N. J., but since that time has been made Bishop of Rochester, N. Y.



a life. At her earnest request I wrote a letter to her sister, Mrs. Devane, of Brooklyn, imploring her to come and take her away from the convent. This letter I sent unknown to Sister Josephine. In a few days her friends called, and with great joy took her away from the convent; they were always opposed to her remaining there. Her friends wrote to Mother Xavier at Madison for her clothes and property, of which they never received one-third. Poor Sister Agnes! On the day of her departure from the convent, she clung to me, sobbing as if her heart would break, and exclaiming, "Oh, sister, I fear I am lost, and that my soul will be damned eternally for abandoning my vocation, but I cannot help it. I have not your submissive perseverance, which patiently submits to the cruelty of convent life!" Poor, misguided soul! she thought she would find love, and calm, and rest, and heaven-born peace, for her sorrowing heart, in the convent; but, alas! with all other deluded ones who embrace this life, she had found only unkindness, coldness, suspicion, jealousy, and ceaseless strife and unhappiness; instead of peace, she had found the most racking doubts and mental conflict; instead of rest, a ceaseless strain of convent observances, and mental and physical toil. Happy girl! to shake off the shackles of conventualism. Would to God she could shake off the chains of Romanism also, and find eternal rest, and peace, and joy in Christ.



## CHAPTER XIV.

INSANITY OF SISTER VIRGINIA AND REBELLION OF SISTER  
ANN ELIZABETH.

AMONG those sisters for whom I entertained a particular regard, none were so dear to me as Sister Virginia. Ellen O'Grady was her worldly name, and she had, before she entered the convent, resided with her mother in Newark, N. J. She entered the convent a few days after myself, therefore she was a candidate with me. She was one of those beautiful, highly gifted souls whom one rarely meets with in a lifetime. There was a certain congeniality of thought and ideas which strongly drew us together, and to each other we poured out our several trials. Her refined and exalted nature felt most acutely the trials of convent life. Among her various accomplishments, she excelled in penmanship, in drawing and painting; and after she received the habit of the novice, she was retained at the mother-house, and appointed teacher of ornamental penmanship and drawing to the young ladies of the Academy. So after our three months' candidateship had expired our intercourse was limited to the few weeks' vacation when the sisters all meet in Madison for the annual retreat. After the three months' postulancy, we entered upon the novitiate, and, for the first time, the rules of the Order were read to us; and as one of the rules forbids the nuns to ever form particular friendships or attachments, we then confessed to the superior our attachment for each other, which had been formed when we were ignorant of the rules. The Rev. Mother Superior separated us by sending me to Paterson to spend my novitiate; but the friendship between us still continued.

The last time I saw her was in July 1866. Never will I forget the final words she spoke to me as I was

about leaving again for Jersey City. We were entirely alone for a few minutes, when she clasped my hand and with deep solemnity of word and manner, said, "Sister, convent life is a living death. Convent life is hell upon earth, and convent life is driving me MAD. I feel it! I feel it!" Deeply moved by her words, I replied, "Dear Sister, drive such thoughts from your mind. It is true that we have realized that conventualism is a system calculated to destroy the brightest intellect and talent and root out of the heart every beautiful and tender feeling; nevertheless, dear sister, the awakening comes too late—too late. We must persevere for our soul's sake until the welcome angel of death comes to our deliverance." She rejoined, "I trust, my sister, that the words I utter against my vocation will not scandalize you; yet I feel that I will never see you again, and I must speak out to you my convictions; for to no one else in the community would I utter them. The enormities which I witness here daily, and the outrageous insults offered to my nature from our chaplain, whose unlawful professions of love fill me with horror, causes my reason to totter on its throne; and I feel—I know that I shall lose my mind." She then embraced me most affectionately, begging me to pray for her, while her expressive blue eyes filled with tears, and her beautiful and sensitive lips quivered with emotion as she uttered the words, "Good-bye, my soul's companion! Good-bye forever! If you ever see me again, I feel that I shall be insane—mad." How prophetic were her words! When I went to the mother-house again, on the retreat of 1867, Sister Virginia was not there; she was an inmate of the Insane Asylum, at Mount Hope, Maryland.

Sisters never know what takes place in the different convents of the order, therefore I was most anxious to learn the cause of Sister Virginia's insanity, but it being against the *rules* to make any inquiries, or ask unnecessary questions, in regard to the health or absence of the nuns; which is a very wise rule, for if the questions were allowed to be asked, and if they were truth-

fully answered, how much misery, crime, and martyrdom would be revealed. The nuns make a spiritual retreat every year in June, upon which occasion all the nuns from the Convents of the Order in the State assemble at the mother-house. On these occasions I always missed from ten to twelve nuns, whose fate remained a mystery to all, except the few official nuns who sat in the secret council. After the retreat of 1867 was over, I went directly to Mother Xavier, and confessed to her the knowledge I had of the cause of Sister Virginia's insanity, which the unhappy sister herself had revealed to me when I saw her for the last time. I told Mother Xavier that Sister Virginia had then told me of the persecutions she suffered at the hands of the chaplain, who was so enamoured with her, that he tried every persuasion to induce her to yield blind obedience to his wishes—but he completely failed—he then tried persecution and penance, and shut her up night after night in a filthy dungeon in the cellar, without air or light, infested with rats and mice, only releasing her for the two hours in the morning, when she had to teach drawing and penmanship in the Academy. When Mother Xavier thus learned that poor Sister Virginia had confided to me the cruel facts which led to her insanity, she then admitted that it was true, and said that Sister Virginia had been refractory, and her confessor too severe with her, until one morning, when he went to release her from the dungeon to teach her class as usual, she flew at him, a raving maniac, tearing him with her nails. For three days and nights she was unmanageable and in her ravings reproached the nuns and priests with all manner of crime. When she became more calm she was attired in worldly clothes, and taken to the Mount Hope Insane Asylum, in Maryland, which is entirely controlled by nuns. Sister Virginia's family were kept in ignorance of her insanity. After Mother Xavier had informed me of these facts, she solemnly commanded me, through my vow of blind obedience, never to reveal to a living soul the knowledge I had of Sister Virginia's insanity; which I never

dared to do, until God in His mercy converted my soul. I then not only revealed it in my lectures, but I told Mrs. O'Grady, the poor mother of Sister Virginia, who knew nothing about the fate of her daughter until I told her, when the poor broken-hearted mother went to Mount Hope Asylum, where she saw her once beautiful daughter hopelessly insane—reason dethroned from its beautiful seat, and that once highly gifted and talented girl a mental wreck, another of the many such victims of that accursed and deplorable system of conventualism. Poor Virginia! could she have abandoned the loveless, hopeless life she led in the convent, when she first felt the dread foreboding of the sad fate which came upon her, and returned to the love and care of her mother, she would have been saved from mental shipwreck; but, alas! she was bound by vows which she would conscientiously keep even at the sacrifice of reason. An average of four to six nuns every year are sent from the convent in Madison to the Insane Asylum, hopelessly insane. Rebellious and refractory nuns are kept shut up in dungeons on bread and water until they go mad, or fill an early grave. In very extreme cases the Pope will dispense them from their vows, as he did Sister Ann Elizabeth. This sister was one of the first candidates when the community was established in the diocese of Newark, in 1859. Sister Ann Elizabeth is well known in Jersey City, where she was Superior for Several years in St. Peter's parish. In the community of Madison a secret council is convened every month for the purpose of settling all the difficulties of the Order. It is in these councils sentence is pronounced upon refractory sisters, and all the secrets and crimes of the community discussed. The council consists of the reverend Mother Xavier and three sisters next to her in office—viz., the nuns who fill the offices of Treasurer, Secretary, and Procurator, presided over by the Father Superior, who at that time was Father McQuade. Sister Ann Elizabeth was one of the sisters who sat in this council. She was an Irish lady possessing great dignity of character, which could not

brook anything degrading. When she was admitted as a member of the secret council, her eyes were opened, and she could not remain a member of a community where she knew they did such wicked things. I remember the last time I saw her was during our summer retreat in 1866, when she was first admitted to a seat in the council. After the door had been closed on the secret council for three hours, she came into the study hall, where the novices and young professed nuns were assembled, and thus addressed us: "Sisters, I advise every one of you to leave this abode and go back to your homes, for I am sure the curse of God will fall upon this accursed community, on account of the crimes covered up, and which I as a member of the secret council know. Sisters, if you knew what I know you would fly from here." Sister Ann Elizabeth was very much excited while she spoke, and we all looked upon her in amazement. Mother Xavier came in while sister was speaking, and in the most bland and sympathetic manner said, "Sisters, I request your prayers for our dear and worthy Sister Ann Elizabeth, who has become another victim to insanity. Do not notice what she is saying—she is crazy." Sister Ann Elizabeth was not insane, she was in possession of all her mental and physical powers; she went to Bishop Bayley, and demanded of him to send to Rome and get a dispensation from the Pope to dispense her from her vows, and if he did not comply with her desire, she would expose the convent and publicly reveal the crimes she had found out in the council, but if he would get her a dispensation she would only ask him to refund to her half of the 50,000 dollars she brought into the convent. She would then go to live with some of her relatives in Ireland and never tell the scandal. In order to avoid the scandal and exposure which Bishop Bayley so much feared, and because of the powerful influence which Sister Ann Elizabeth's relatives and friends possessed in the Church and State, he complied with her request, and dispensed her. Sister Ann Joseph, whom I introduced to my readers in Pater-son, also demanded to be dispensed from her vows, be-



cause of the strength of her maternal instincts. When she left the convent she had been *infidele a ses vœux de chastete, et etait enceinte*. Suspicion rested upon Rev. Father Brann, D.D., formerly of Jersey City, as her accomplice. Besides the large number of nuns who became insane, a great number died, and there were others whose mysterious disappearance was never accounted for. The sisters I have mentioned, who left the convent, remained Roman Catholics, therefore the world will never know the circumstances which led them to surmount the difficulties of an escape from the unnatural discipline of convent life, and even if they do not remain Roman Catholics, perhaps their own share in sins will prevent them from denouncing a system which is a disgrace to civilization; but at the Judgment Day there will be a fearful unraveling of clerical and monastic entanglements. That day will unmask to the world the false hearts of priests and nuns; and in the hands of a strictly just God I leave them.



## CHAPTER XV.

REV. WM. M. WALSH.

ONE Saturday evening in April, 1867, Father Venuta came into the convent as usual to hear the sisters' weekly confession, and when he was about to depart he turned to me, and in a jesting manner said, "O seesther, you will have a new priest to-morrow—a nice young Irishman." Why did a terrible presentiment of some mighty sorrow overshadow my soul, and with an icy grasp chill my inmost heart as Father Venuta made this announcement? Why was I so oppressed by an undefined weight of impending evil? Ah! it was the weird foreshadowing of one of the most bitter trials and cruel wrongs that ever pierced a pure woman's heart. Let the sequel show.

On the Sunday after his arrival, Rev. William M. Walsh was conducted by Father Venuta into the convent, and introduced to the nuns. When he was presented to me he extended his hand, which I feigned not to see, because I experienced an unaccountable shrinking from contact with him. Father Walsh at that time had been four years a priest, and was just arrived, in company with five other priests, from Australia, where his brother, Rev. Thomas Walsh, is also a priest. The five priests, who, together with Father Walsh, had some trouble with Bishop Quinn, of Queensland, Australia, in 1867, and because of the Bishop's arbitrary injustice quitted his diocese for America, were the Revs. James McGahann, Davitt, Hogan, Renehan, and Sheehan.

At the time of my introduction to Father Walsh he was about twenty-six years of age. In personal appearance he was tall, graceful, and dignified, possessing a handsome face, and a most fascinating and winning manner. He had such a meek and holy expression of countenance that his brother priests called him the

"Angelic," or the "Youthful St. Aloysius." Dear readers, pity me in this most painful task of speaking of this man. Oh, how can I portray to you the depth of his treachery, or recall his perfidy? The Roman Catholic priesthood or hierarchy is composed in great part of hypocrites, but Father Walsh was certainly one of the most consummate hypocrites I ever met. And yet it might have been otherwise, were it not for that curse of society, Romish celibacy—a system which, instead of twining a wreath of celestial flowers for Hymen's brow, crushes and buries the sweetest of all human affections in the grave of infamy, where the body and soul perishes. Father Walsh *might have been* a bright ornament to society and the world, for he was possessed of great intellectual capacity. He might have been a kind, loving, and devoted husband, a tender and indulgent parent, for his temperament was most ardent and affectionate. When I speak of the unutterable injury this man tried to inflict upon me, and the cruel persecution and heart-wrung sorrow he has occasioned me, I blame the accursed SYSTEM more than the MAN. The man I leave with "Him who willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live"; but the wicked system I deplore and condemn with all the energy of my being.

Father Walsh, after his introduction to me, placed himself in my way, often spending from one to two hours a day in my class-room. His manner was always kind and affectionate, while he treated me with the most profound respect and marked attention. One day, about six weeks since I first saw him, he was reviewing my class, and when the exercises were over he handed me the book, at the same time clasped my hand, and with an inexpressible tenderness in look and tone, said: "Sister, I love you—I love you; O God! better than my own soul do *I love you!*" At these strange, passionate words, I snatched my hand from his burning clasp, and, without uttering a word, I retreated from the school-room, flew to my cell, and flinging myself on my knees in an agony

of grief, prayed for strength to combat this, the greatest temptation of my life. O God! what words had I heard: "Sister, I love you—more than my soul I love you!" Oh, how they pierced my inmost being; an anointed priest of God had been guilty of uttering such words to me, a consecrated virgin—a spouse of Christ! Oh, sacrilege, sacrilege! ! It was a crime for me to listen to such words. I had made vows to God, and I would be faithful to them, even though my heart should break in the attempt.

For several days I avoided Father Walsh by retreating from the class-room as soon as he entered it. Finally, he called after school hours, and requested an interview with me in the parlor. Tremblingly I went to meet him, praying God to help me. When I entered the parlor I was astonished at his haggard appearance, and his sad, unhappy look. I said, "Father, whatever you have to say, speak it quickly, and do not, I beg you, repeat the words you uttered last to me, for I cannot listen to them; they are sacrilegious, they are insulting to me." He replied, "Oh, sister, dearest sister, forgive me! I know my words trouble you, but I must speak them—my heart is breaking! Oh, my God, why did I ever become a priest? Dear sister, when I first saw you I loved you, and I have not known a happy moment since, and I fear never will again. Oh, sweet love, I am fearfully tempted! I cannot drive you from my thoughts. In my masses, prayers, and divine offices, your image comes between me and my God. Oh, sister, I cannot help loving you. *I do worship you*, and how happy we might be if it were only lawful for us to be married! Oh, if you were not a nun, and I were not a priest!" At these words he wept bitterly, while his frame shook and trembled with deepest anguish. In my girlhood days, before I entered the convent, I had listened to many professions of love and proposals of marriage, but my heart had never responded to them. I had never loved man as I felt I was capable of loving, and I always regarded marriage in such a *pure* light, that in order to

enter into its sacred cares and responsibilities I must meet a man to whom I could give all the deep love of my nature. Such a man I had never met; and now, when it is too late, when I am forever shut out from all human love and affection, I am moved for the first time by the passionate appeal of this man—an appeal which called forth a pure response from the very depth of my nature. I could have loved that man, but it was too late. When his emotion had in a measure subsided, he said, “And now, dear love, tell me that you love me also.” My heart ached while I replied to him thus: “Father, I am sorry that you have crossed my path. Would to God that we had never met! And now that we have, we must separate. It is sinful for us to remain in the same place—we can never be anything more to each other than we are at the present. Are we not both bound by vows whose sacred obligations we must fulfill, else forfeit the salvation of our immortal souls? And if we lose our souls, what doth the whole world profit us, or what shall we give in exchange for them? I am sorry, father, if my words pain you; but know that my heart is breaking while I conscientiously speak these words of duty. I have already sinned in listening to you, and I beg you will never repeat such expressions of love to me again. I will this day write to Mother Xavier, and beg of her to remove me from here to some other place where we will not be in danger of meeting each other, and then, dear father, let us hope that we will meet and be united in heaven.” I then immediately left the parlor—left him weeping, and hastened to my cell, and there in mortal anguish which none but God can ever know, I cast myself at His feet, and with a suffering heart prayed to be delivered from one of the severest trials that human infirmity can encounter, an unlawful love. Oh, the mental conflict I endured in that terrible struggle between conscience and inclination! On one side my poor, hungering, perishing human heart was pleased to know that it had found some one to love, and was beloved in return. On the other side conscience goaded me, styling that love a

crime, a sin, a sacrilege! Only those who have experienced such a conflict can ever know or understand its meaning.

I wrote a letter at once to Mother Xavier, explaining to her my temptation, and imploring her to remove me to another city. I received no answer to that letter. Father Walsh did not immediately renew the expression of his love verbally, but his every look and tone exhibited it. I avoided seeing him as much as I possibly could, and was wretchedly unhappy. Thus passed two months of the sorest temptation, when I was called to Madison to make the annual retreat. After the retreat I went on my knees to Mother Xavier, and pleaded with her, for Christ's sake and my soul's salvation, not to send me back to Jersey City, because Father Walsh had made the most ardent professions of love to me. I told her I ardently desired to be faithful to my vocation, and if she would thus remove me from the place of trial, I might succeed in driving the thought of his love from my mind. She laughed at me, exclaiming, "Indeed, you ought to feel highly honored to have won the *love* of such a handsome young priest; but I guess you only imagine it, and if you are not *tried* you will never gain the victory."

"Yes, mother; but our Lord says, 'Those who love danger shall perish in it,' and if wood is thrown in the fire it will burn."

She replied, "So you have come to dictate to your superiors, have you? Is that keeping the vow of obedience, which of the three vows has supremacy?" I left her and repaired to the chapel, and if ever a bursting heart poured forth a fervent prayer to God, that heart was mine as I cast myself at the foot of the Cross, and begged my Heavenly Father, for the sake of Christ, His beloved Son, to save my blood-bought soul, and not to place me where I would be tempted beyond my strength. I made this prayer with so much faith and confidence in God, that I felt sure He would not place me in danger of losing my soul. "The ways of the Lord are unsearchable, yet He doeth all things well." My soul



was to be saved through the fiery crucible of tribulation. God would not permit my soul to be lost, although I often afterwards, in my fearful desolation and struggle, reproached God for what I then thought was my destruction, but which proved in the end my salvation.

After the retreat of July, 1867, I was the only sister sent back to Jersey City who had ever been there before. I was placed in Sister Josephine's office as Sister Superior over St. Joseph's Convent, while she, who had been a superior in different cities for over seven years, was that year sent to the convent in Trenton to fill the lowest office in the house there. Her arbitrary spirit resented this humiliation, and her heart deeply felt the trial of being so far removed from her *dear* Father Senez, in Jersey City, to whom she was deeply attached.

Mother Xavier appointed me to the office of Sister Superior because she knew my duties in that position would throw me more in contact with Father Walsh than ever. If obedience required I would have to consult him fifty times a day, for I could not do anything of importance in the parish or church without his permission.

Sister Aloysius, Sister Mary Clare, Sister Ann Maria, Sister Calista, and Sister Stanislaus were the sisters sent with me to Jersey City. The action of Mother Xavier in sending me back to Father Walsh, seemed by the sequel a vile plot on her part to effect the ruin of my soul and body, and rob me of the priceless pearl of innocence which was dearer to me than a thousand lives. Indeed, all her actions towards me in regard to Father Walsh proves that she sought to work out my destruction, as she had previously done to many a young nun before, who, if not living degraded lives in the convent, were filling early graves, or inmates of insane asylums.



## CHAPTER XVI.

## MY BROTHER VISITS ME IN JERSEY CITY.

As my duties now more than ever brought me in contact with Father Walsh, I told him after I came back that as long as Mother Xavier had treated my entreaties to be removed from there with contempt, the only hope remaining was for him to go to Bishop Bayley and request another parish. This he refused to do. Father Walsh was not troubled so much as myself with conscientious scruples. I wondered how he could dare to offer the sacrifice of the Mass, or administer the Sacraments, when his thoughts were fixed on me instead of those sacred duties. He often repeated his love in the most endearing terms, and with burning eloquence begged me to leave the convent, and go with him to some foreign country, and there get married by a Protestant minister, and be happy. He said he could not live without me, that I was dearer to him than God or his soul's salvation, and for my sake he was ready to brave persecution and poverty. He entreated me to throw off the Roman Catholic religion altogether, telling me that he knew in his heart and soul it was not the true religion of Christ, nor had it been the incorruptible primitive Church of Christ since the sixth century. I was strictly exact and scrupulously faithful to my vocation. No unkindness or cruelty on the part of the sisters could make me abandon it; even my great love for my mother or home could not tempt me to leave the convent or break the vows upon which I thought my salvation depended. Purity was my standard above all virtues, and prizing it more than my life, it was in vain he held out such inducements. At that time a marriage by a Protestant minister appeared to me, as it does to all Romanists, to be null and void, consequently no marriage—another form of degradation

and debasement. Moreover, as a strict Roman Catholic, I believed an anointed priest ought not to think of a wife. "Once a priest, always a priest, according to the order of Melchisedek"; and I, being a consecrated virgin to the Lord, viewed the idea of marriage as utterly impossible as long as I should remain a Roman Catholic. I clung to my Church with all the tenacity which characterizes sincere Roman Catholics, who think there is no salvation outside of the precincts of their Church; and to throw off a religion which had been instilled into my heart from infancy, and had become as it were part of my nature, required a miracle of Divine grace which at that time I neither looked for nor desired.

I felt it was a mere mockery for me to go to confession and communion while I was continually tormented by the burning words, tender glances, and loving manner of Father Walsh; for I was human in every sense of the word, despite the unnatural restraint my false religion placed upon me, and my poor humanity groaned and writhed under its crushing weight of temptation.

About this time I was also troubled about some articles of the Roman Catholic faith, especially the "doctrine of transubstantiation." An incident occurred which caused my faith in the Eucharist to waver. I had charge of making the "hosts," which are prepared from an unleavened batter of flour and water. One Sunday there was a large number of communicants, and the priest, not having enough of "hosts," sent into the convent for some more. I had none prepared to send him immediately, but in about fifteen minutes I sent him a sufficient number. The canonical time, however, for consecration was past, yet the priest gave the wafers *unconsecrated* to the people. I afterwards apologized to the priest for not being able to supply him in time with the "hosts," to which he replied, "For those who have faith it is just the same, for they did not know the difference." And is there, then, any difference, was a torturing question which filled my unhappy soul with agonizing doubts.

Was Jesus Christ, as true God and true man, really

and substantially present under the appearance of bread and wine? Was He really hidden in the unleavened "host," with or without consecration?

The priest said if the people had faith it made no difference. Yet my Church had taught me that as soon as the priest had pronounced over the "host" the words of consecration, the body of Jesus Christ was immediately present therein—the same body that was born of the sacred Virgin, the same that died upon the cross, that was raised again to life, and sits at the right hand of God the Father; that in a hundred thousand masses which are said throughout the extent of the whole Church in the space of an hour, God works this miracle *ONLY* at the moment the priest finishes the words of consecration, irrespective of the people's faith.

These were the tenets I must believe without embarrassing myself with curious researches: and yet I had heard a priest, who had the power to *create* a God by a few words, say the people did not know the difference between the consecrated and unconsecrated "hosts." This was a great blow to my vivid faith in the Real Presence, and I struggled against it as a most trying temptation. To doubt an article of the Roman Catholic faith is a more grievous sin than the commission of a murder, because for the murderer there is the remedy of a good confession and the priest's absolution; but for a soul that hesitates to believe, and doubts the sufficiency of the Roman Catholic faith, there is no salvation. I trembled at this temptation, and I thought God had forsaken me and delivered me over to the devil; but, blessed be God! He gives death and gives life. He conducts even to the gates of hell, and brings back again to a clearer, truer, and more glorious life.

Added to the numerous temptations which then assailed me was an internal aridity of spirit which desolated my soul, requiring a most powerful effort of will to keep me in the path of duty. Assailed by temptations, difficulties, and contradictions from without, and by disgust, torpor, and despair within, heart-sick, perplexed, afflicted, for-

saken and cast down, I struggled to gain the victory in the contest between nature and grace, between faith and reason; but dry and hard as my daily bread was then, it was sweet in comparison to that of which I was to partake ere I entered into rest. The cup of bitterness I had to drink to the very dregs.

In the midst of these internal and external trials I received a visit from my brother John. On the 20th of November, 1867, I was called into the parlor to see a young man, without any idea that it was my brother. I did not know him at first, he was so changed from the beardless school-boy of sixteen to whom I bade farewell over five years before. I could scarcely believe that the tall, handsome young man before me was really my brother John; and then my poor heart had given up all thoughts of ever seeing any member of my family. He was on his way to San Francisco, and while waiting in New York City for the steamer to sail had found me out and called to see me. I could see him unrestricted, for I was then Sister Superior. He questioned me about my happiness, which I assured him was complete in being the spouse of Christ, and that nothing on earth could exceed the joy I experienced as the bride of the King of kings. How in the very depths of my heart I despised myself for practicing such dissimulation! in the very time, too, when I seemed to be lost in an impenetrable wilderness of midnight darkness, hedged in on all sides by thorns and briars from which I tried to extricate myself, only to become more and more entangled, pierced, and torn! I tried to look heavenward, but only to find black, black darkness—no light, no ray of hope, no escape; yet I dared to equivocate, and tell my brother *I was happy*.

Brother spoke to me of my dearly-loved parents, of my once happy home, and all its loved ones; spoke to me of my darling mother, told me of her grief because I was gone from her; of her anxiety when she could not hear from me, and of her anguish that she could not see me. Oh, my mother, if I could have seen you, and

spoken to you of my temptations, my trials, my difficulties at that time, you might have saved your daughter from the precipice upon which she was standing, you would have shielded her from the fearful tempest which was about to burst in fury upon her unprotected head! John sailed on the 21st of November for California. The following letter was written by him to my parents just before his departure, and was afterwards given me by my sister Gertrude:—

“ST. NICHOLAS HOTEL,  
“New York, November 20th, 1867.

“DEAR PARENTS,—I wish to inform you that I have seen my sister Edith. She is in Jersey City, N. J. I went to Paterson, and the nuns told me she had gone from there three years ago. I had considerable difficulty in finding her, but was repaid a hundredfold for the trouble—the very sight of her would have been sufficient reward. She is the very image of happiness and contentment. She was overjoyed to see me; kissed and embraced me, and I did the same. And why should I not?—my own dear sister! my beautiful sister! She is really happy. She is Superior there, and the people think everything of her—they venerate her; and who could do otherwise? I was not aware that I loved her so much. I had the pleasure of her company for two or three hours, and we talked volumes in that time. They were the happiest hours of my life. I gave her mother’s picture, Gertrude’s and my own. Oh, I cannot paint the scene that took place when she saw mother’s picture. Dear Parents, she looked as beautiful as ever, with her large deep blue eyes, and holy, mild expression. Her long, bright golden hair, of which we were all once so proud, is cut off short, and hidden under her veil. She is looking as hearty and rosy as ever, and there is nothing feigned—it is all so real. Oh, how affectionate and kind! she carries an indescribable charm with her. I am told that the women of the place, when they meet her, kneel down and ask her blessing. Please send this letter to Gertrude, in Boston. She wishes to see Gertrude, and



wants her to come and see her, or else write to her. Direct to Sister Teresa de Chantal, Sister Superior of St. Joseph's Convent, Jersey City, N. J. She sends her kindest love to all. If nothing happens I sail tomorrow. Good-bye, and pray for your

“Affectionate Son,

“JOHN SARSFIELD O’GORMAN.

“Farewell for a few ocean weeks.”

From the tenor of this letter it is plainly seen how well I succeeded in deceiving him, and how completely I hid from him my true condition. Although I suffered in the deception, still I could not let my brother know that I was miserably unhappy in the life I had voluntarily chosen. And thus it is that Roman Catholics are deceived in the true condition of their friends and relatives who are pining uncomplainingly in their prison home. No matter how great the sufferings nuns endure they must never make the slightest manifestations of their anguish to the world, especially to their relatives, when allowed to see them. Though their hearts should break, they must smile and look happy to the world; but God had decreed that one day I should lay bare convent hypocrisy, lift the veil, and let all the world know the hidden crimes and misery of the sanctuary.



## CHAPTER XVII.

## MY ESCAPE.

ALMOST driven to desperation by the importunities of Father Walsh, who was ardently urging me to become his wife, I sent the following letter to Mother Xavier, of which I carefully preserved a copy:—

JERSEY CITY, December 15th, 1867.

“In the hearts of Jesus and Mary.

“DEAR MOTHER: Once again I address you in order to beg of you to remove me from the terrible temptations which surround me here. ‘My soul is sorrowful even unto death.’ Will you not have pity upon me, and take me away from Father Walsh? How can I worthily receive the sacraments, when by my weekly confessions I must accuse myself of listening to expressions of an *unlawful love*—a sacrilegious *love*? and how can I avoid it as long as you permit me to remain near the occasion? Now I beg of you, for Christ’s sake, for religion’s sake, and for my soul’s sake, to remove me from this awful danger. I wish to be faithful unto death to my vocation, and I beg of you to listen to my prayer, and remove me from this heavy cross.

“Yours in the hearts of Jesus and Mary,

“SISTER TERESA DE CHANTAL.”

To this letter I received the following reply:—

“ST. ELIZABETH’S, MADISON, Dec. 28th, 1867.

“SISTER TERESA DE CHANTAL:

“MY CHILD,—Your last letter to me shows a very rebellious and unresigned spirit. Remember, Father

Walsh is a holy priest of God, and will no nothing wrong; he knows better than you what is a sin and what is not. He is only testing you. I am sorry that you are not in a more tranquil state of mind. Remember, the *will* of your superiors is that of God, and they *will* you to remain where you are. Your mother in Christ,

“MOTHER MARY XAVIER.”

From this letter my readers can see I had nothing to expect from the woman whose *will* I was bound to obey. Every day Father Walsh's protestations became more ardent. I entreated him, if he loved me, to prove that love by keeping away from me, and not to see me at all. I represented to him the anguish his expressions of love occasioned me; I pointed out to him his infidelity to his sacred obligations, which he seemed to hold very lightly, as he so often urged me to leave the convent and go with him. However, a crisis was at hand which would change the whole course of my life, brought about by Father Walsh attempting one of the most appalling crimes that has ever called for retributive justice at the hands of injured humanity. Oh, how can I speak of it?—how recall it?—how express the untold anguish, the awful suffering I afterwards endured, which resulted in my being torn away from my close membership in the Roman Catholic religion, a religion which had been indeed part of myself.

The 19th of January, 1868, came on Sunday. I was performing my usual office of Sacristan, and at seven o'clock in the evening was engaged in the church removing the vesper decorations from the altar, and adorning it for the morning's early mass. While thus employed Father Walsh came in and knelt down on the altar steps as if in prayer. He then came into the vestry-room behind the altar, where I was arranging some flowers into

bouquets, which were intended to ornament the tabernacle, and pulling a small pocket-flask out of his pocket, said, "Dear Sister, I notice you have a very bad cough. I have brought some cordial for you, which is a sure remedy; I am confident it will do you good, and I wish you would try some of it now, dearest." At the same time he poured some of the "cordial" into an ablution glass and offered me to drink. With all the simplicity of innocence I drank a few sips out of the glass, which no sooner had I swallowed than I experienced in the depths of my soul such a TERRIBLE FOREBODING of some impending evil—the same that I felt the first time I met him, only increased to tenfold more force and conviction. This impression of coming danger filled me with so great a horror that I at once threw the glass and the contents on the floor. In a few moments I felt such an overpowering weakness, or feeling of numbness, which covered me with a cold perspiration. Everything seemed to grow dark, and I was obliged to stagger to a chair to avoid falling. With all the energy of a strong determination. I fought against the stupor that I felt overpowering me, and by God's help, and my own strength of will, I succeeded in throwing off that physical faintness to such an extent that I was just able to totter to the door, which led from the vestry-room of the church, into the corridor of the convent, when with all my remaining strength I called for Sister Aloysius. Therefore, the WOULD-BE DESTROYER was prevented from carrying into effect the basest of diabolical wrongs which it is possible to contemplate on a *pure-souled*, innocent woman.

The Lord had saved me, but O God! what an awakening! what a revelation! what a wrong had been attempted! A man who had professed such an undying love, a man who, according to Romish teaching, was

anointed of the Lord, a *holy* priest who daily *handled, ate, and drank* the body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ, had, in the very presence of the Blessed Sacrament, before the Holy Tabernacle, under the lamp of the Sanctuary, in the House of God, attempted the most atrocious of crimes—to desecrate a consecrated virgin! Oh, what a disgrace to humanity! what sacrilegious crime! No wonder my brain was crazed. No wonder I became deranged in comprehending the horrible enormity of such a crime. All is a blank in my memory from the time when Sister Aloysius assisted me to my cell, after I recovered from the faintness at the vestry-room door, until Tuesday, the 28th of January, when I came back to consciousness. I afterwards learned from Sister Aloysius that on that terrible Sunday evening, about one hour after she left me in the cell, I rushed into the community-room with the most heartrending look of despair and horror depicted on my face, and there gave way to the most uncontrollable grief she had ever witnessed. She called in Dr. Hays, Senior, Roman Catholic physician, of Jersey City, who told her I was threatened with insanity, the result of some terrible mental shock. She immediately telegraphed to Mother Xavier, who sent back a dispatch ordering me to be conveyed in a carriage to Madison. Heartless woman! she was obliged to remove me at last. I became so unmanageable in the carriage that the sisters were compelled to stop at the convent in South Orange; and it was there I found myself on the 28th, when I awoke again to consciousness. The horror of the crime attempted, and the effect of the drug administered produced a temporary insanity; but the agony I endured, the sense of injury I felt, the desecration of all that I believed to be sacred and holy, was enough to derange almost the strongest mind, situated

as I had been, beyond the hope of a recovery. Many of the nuns were sent from Madison to the Insane Asylum, at Mount Hope, in Maryland, hopelessly insane for less cause.

On the morning of the day I recovered consciousness I went to confession in South Orange, to Rev. Dr. Corrigan, and told him the fearful crime which had been attempted; and that man, appointed a spiritual guide to souls, chided me for making such a noise about it, because a man was *not* responsible for what he did when blinded by passion, and therefore it was not a crime, and I must not take it to heart as one. This priest, Rev. Dr. Corrigan, who at that time was President of Seton Hall College, South Orange, New Jersey, and weekly confessor to the nuns there, but after Bishop Bayley was elevated to the Primacy as Archbishop of Baltimore, Dr. Corrigan was consecrated Bishop of Newark, N. J., an office he filled until 1880, when he was made Archbishop of Petra, and Coadjutor to Cardinal McCloskey, of New York City, where he now resides. Such were the words addressed to my sinking, perishing soul, by this great dignitary of the Church. Such the excuse offered in palliation for a crime that would disgrace the evil one *himself*. Priests and nuns seemed linked together for my destruction.

On the Monday, January 27th, the Mother Mary Xavier came from Madison to see me, and the next day, finding me apparently well, she said, "Well, well, the idea! Why, sister, I thought you were sick! Indeed, it's only putting on airs you are! The *idea* of a Sister of Charity putting on airs, and making believe crazy. Well, well, come now, put on your mantle and go with me. You are worth a dozen crazy nuns yet! The *idea* of you cutting up so!" and she continued bantering me in the



above style for some time. I said, "Mother, if you had removed me from Jersey City when I entreated you Father Walsh would not have attempted such a sacrilege." She said. "Don't get excited now, sister, you have given us all a great fright; I was afraid I would have to send you to the insane asylum." Could there be anything more heartless than her words? I made myself ready to accompany her, thinking she was going to take me to Madison; but, no, wicked woman! she takes me back again to Jersey City. Could anything be more malevolent than this action of Mother Xavier's? Can anything be more inhuman than to take a wounded, frightened lamb, and re-thrust it into the jaws of the wolf?—than to thrust a child, all burned and blistered, back into the fire? Thus my lacerated heart was thrust back to be re-lacerated.

On Thursday morning Father Walsh had the audacity to come into the convent, and without ceremony walked upstairs into the community-room, where I was alone. The sight of him so maddened me that I cannot remember what he said, I think it was something about forgiveness, and that he could not live without me. I ordered him out of my presence.

My brain was on fire, my heart bleeding, my soul in agony! I was desperate, and not responsible for anything I might do. My soul abhorred the priests; they were vipers. I condemned the nuns and the convent as all defilement. I could not remain there longer; the very thought was unendurable. I would fly—escape—but where? and would not my soul be eternally damned if I abandoned my vocation? Ah! and would it not be also damned if I remained in the convent? If so, I would rather be damned *out* of the convent than *in* it. It was about ten o'clock in the morning—all the nuns were

engaged in teaching—I, the Sister Superior, might not be missed until noon. Therefore, wild with excitement, I donned the bonnet and cloak which the nuns wear when they go in the street, softly unlocked the doors and gates, and turned my back on convent life for ever. I did not premeditate the step I took that stormy January day, else I would have made better provision. Goaded to desperation, I only thought of escaping from the hateful presence of priests and nuns. With five dollars a servant girl previously gave me as a New Year present, which my vow of poverty forbade me to take for myself, so I took it for the Altar, but forgetting to put it aside for that object, I fled in mid-winter out into the world, without shelter, without protection; but better that than the abode of vipers and a life of sin.

I knew not where I was fleeing; I cared not. Oh, anywhere, anywhere out of the convent; I asked a news-boy I met on the snow-covered street to accompany me to some station, and I found myself on board of a train, without a ticket, without even knowing the destination of the train, nor the fact that I possessed even the five dollars until the conductor entered the car to collect the tickets, when I found in my purse the five dollars, and paid the conductor for my fare to Philadelphia. Not until I found myself in room 91, Continental Hotel, Philadelphia, where my name is registered as Sister Edith Crofton, not daring to register Sister Teresa de Chantal, for fear of being recaptured, without money and in my nun's dress, did I fully realize my true position. I had been borne up during the day by the excitement of escaping the convent, but when that had passed away, and I was free from pursuit, I felt to the full extent my desolate, destitute, and miserable condition. I paced my room all night; my heart seemed rent asunder with con-

flicting reflections. I had fled the convent—by one step had thrown off all restraint of vows and vocation which had chained me for so many suffering years. Oh, fearful reflection! I was by so doing doomed to perdition. Thus it appeared then, blind votary that I was. If I had only thrown off the delusion years before I would have been spared a world of woe.

I remember that night, the 31st of January, 1868, was the first time I had beheld my face in a mirror for nearly six years, and oh, what change! I did not know myself, and repeatedly asked the reflection in the glass, "Is that Edith O'Gorman? Is it Sister Teresa de Chantal, or Who is it? What is it? Am I crazy or dreaming, living or dead?" Having been buried in the convent so long I knew nothing of the world, especially such a world as I found myself then in, without money, without shelter, without friends, without protection. What was I to do? Where could I go? What would become of me? But He who clothes the lily of the valley had me in His care, and He did not let me perish. I knelt down and prayed; and then the thought occurred to me to write to Bishop Wood, the Bishop of Philadelphia; I did so, requesting an interview, and sent the letter to him in the morning by one of the waiters. In the afternoon I saw him, and under the seal of the confessional (he could not take any steps to have me sent back to the convent from any knowledge he might receive through the confessional without breaking his auricular oath), told him who I was, and what I had done; for if I had told him outside the confessional it would have been incumbent on him to take me back. The Romish priesthood, by their auricular oath, which is the seal of the confessional, dare not act upon, nor make use of, any knowledge they have received in the confessional, not if it were to save a whole commonwealth from destruction, not to save the lives of hundreds of people from death, not even to save their own individual lives, and above all the obligations by which the Roman Catholic priesthood are bound; they are generally faithful to their auricular vows; if they were not they would under-

mine the whole system of the confessional, which is the stronghold of the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholics would not go to confession to their priests and confess the abominable crimes they may be guilty of if they thought it was to be revealed, or in any way made use of, and it is owing to the wonderful confidence they have in the confessional that they reveal the inmost secrets of their souls. Bishop Wood did all in his power to induce me to go back to the convent; he coaxed and he threatened, he said that if I did not wish to return to the convent from which I had escaped, he would take me to any convent in the diocese that I preferred. I told him that I had taken the step once and for ever, and asked him to write to the Pope and dispense me from my vows, then I would do all I could as a good Roman Catholic to save my soul in the world; but on no condition would I consent to be again immured in a convent, to meet, perhaps, a repetition of such wrongs as I had experienced. When he saw that I was in earnest, and he could not do anything else at the time, he said, "I know you are very much embittered, and you have cause to be, and while you are in this excited state of mind I cannot reason with you! but after one or two weeks of quiet reflection and calm consideration you will then be brought to see that you must go back again to the convent. It is the only vocation God has destined you to save your soul in; but promise me that during the few weeks you remain out of the convent you will do everything I tell you to do in order to avoid bringing scandal to the Church." This I promised him. He said, "The first thing you will have to do will be to leave off the nun's dress, which, if you continue to wear, might cause investigation, which would lead to the discovery of the truth"; and on the following day he sent a Roman Catholic dressmaker, Mrs. Wilt, to the Continental Hotel. She dressed me in accordance with his direction. I then received another visit from Bishop Wood, who was accompanied by Father Xavier Schnuttgen, one of the Redemptorist Monks, from the German Redemptorist Monastery of St. Peter's situated

at the corner of Fifth Street and Girard Avenue. He was to be my spiritual adviser and director during the few weeks I was to be out of the convent. They did not think it would be more than a few weeks then. He said, "In order to avoid bringing scandal on the Church you must never tell a living soul while you are out of the convent that you were ever a nun, or the anathemas of the Holy Church will be heaped on you and yours from generation to generation." I was to live with Mrs Wilt, at her residence, 1336 Coates Street, and pass for a widow. I told him *I did not know how* to pass for a widow, but if I had to pass for anything I could much better pass for an orphan, for although my parents were alive we were dead to each other for conscience sake. There could not have been a more desolate orphan on the face of the earth than I felt myself to be then. "Well," he said, "if you can pass for an orphan better, pass for that—pass for anything rather than bring a scandal on the convent."

Oh, what a school for prevarication and deviation from the straightforward path of truth and virtue is the whole system of Roman Catholicism! How grievously lamentable that the groundwork of any faith should be so unpropitious to the nourishment of truth and virtue! A priest, by his vow of celibacy, cannot take a wife, nor lawfully exercise the right of a parent, but he can pander to every illicit desire; can unfeelingly burden the world with his illegitimate offspring; for, is not the door of penance open to him through the keyhole of the confessional? and does not that give him the passport to salvation? The world is injured both by his excesses and his abstemiousness. If he keeps his vow, it may be suicidal to health; if he breaks it, there is poured from the sanctuaries of the church one of the most demoralizing streams of perdition—an effluvium sending out the poison of death!

The Romish Church teaches that God has ordained celibacy as the very acme of the cardinal virtues; but who can recognize a God ordaining any law to deteriorate



the race—to destroy a proper sentiment? Even when one is a most suitable subject for celibacy, how is it with another having the natural amount of sympathy for all that is physical in human nature—with warm affections rounding into passion, what is his fate? Is it by the infamous endeavor to feed his appetency under the hypocritical garb of sanctity, and at the same time stand unblushingly in the altar before the tabernacle of God, raising the chalice of salvation in atonement for the people who innocently trust him—nay, worship him—that God and man are disgraced by this celibate's deformity of soul, of mind, and of principle! His hypocrisy may be a lifetime augmenting the cesspools of the confessional, and in thus disburdening his guilty conscience a clique of men become co-partners in his offense by the protection their auricular oath extends to him and themselves.

Ah! if the secret annals of priestly archives could be laid bare to the world, what a blotch would be blazoned on the brow of Rome!

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## SICK AMONG STRANGERS.

THREE weeks after I left the convent I was prostrated on a bed of sickness. My heart had been so oppressed and crushed by its terrible weight of grief that it gave way, and violent spasmodic action ensued, accompanied with brain fever, which brought me to death's door. My illness continued for several weeks, and, dear reader, language cannot express the woe, the hopeless desolation which overwhelmed me. When conscious, I prayed for death—prayed that I might lose my mind, and cease to be sensible to the accumulation of sorrow which had blighted my life. Only twenty-five years of age, and a broken-hearted fugitive, thrown upon the cold mercies of a selfish world. I was sick, and, as I thought, dying among strangers, without a hope of salvation, without a ray of heavenly light. Oh, God! how vain appeared all my self-sacrifice in the light of eternity! and oh, these long years of suffering were all lost! So much penance and self-denial! My life a dreary, desolate blank!—no certainty, no hope in death—all dark, all dark! Where then was my heavenly Spouse, for whom I died to the world? Where all the meritorious works I had done? Did they comfort me then? Ah! no. In the clear light of eternity the delusion which had so long clouded my mental vision were dissipated. What terrible destiny consigned me, as I then thought, to die among strangers, far from my home, far from my mother, who in the hour of sickness would have tenderly hovered near me; ministered to my wants, and soothed my dying agony? But there was no mother near to cradle me in her arms; no father's presence to cheer and strengthen me; no sister's face to smile upon me; not a single glimpse of the dear forms that gladdened my once happy home. And then beyond the tomb I had no hope, no looking to the merits of Christ, to the atoning blood of Calvary's sacrifice. Oh, what inexpressible terror, dismay, and darkness, for a soul entering into eternity with no hope in Christ, no hope in aught save *goodself*, which in the last hour

dwindles away into the meanest insignificance! God had the keeping of my immortal soul, and in His infinite mercy he plucked the burning brand, and snatched my soul from the yawning gulf.

One day I awoke again to life, and the first object my conscious eyes rested upon was Father Walsh standing by my bedside weeping. When I could rally strength sufficient I inquired how he found me, and why he dared to come near me? Mrs. Wilt, the lady with whom I boarded, discovered from my feverish ravings that there was a Father Walsh in Jersey City, whom I spoke about; and fearing that I might die, had telegraphed to him that I was dying, and he had come to behold *her* whom he had caused to fly from the convent and take refuge among strangers, and his heart was saddened to see my misery. He said he also suffered, when he learned that I ran away from the convent without leaving a clue to my whereabouts, and he supposed I had committed self-destruction, until three months after my flight he had received the telegram from Mrs. Wilt. I will do this man justice when I say that he never acted other than in the most tender, chaste, and respectful manner afterwards, never ceasing to deplore his attempted wrong to me—and I forgave him. Bishop Wood was vexed with Mrs. Wilt because, without his knowledge, she sent for Father Walsh. The Bishop told him that in order that no suspicion might rest upon him as a priest, he must pass for my uncle. He engaged Dr. Shurtz to attend me, and every attention that money could bestow I received. And then I learned that he had a sister in Philadelphia, a widow lady named Mrs. Margaret Sullivan, who, in comfortable circumstances, resided in South Sixteenth Street. I think her number is 967; however, her residence is four or five doors from the corner of Carpenter Street. During my convalescence, Father Walsh came from Jersey City to see me twice a week, returning the same day; and when I was sufficiently recovered he introduced me to his sister, Mrs. Sullivan, who treated me with great kindness. When my strength permitted, I

again went to confession to Father Schnuttgen, where a circumstance occurred which prevented me from going to that monastery again. A large fleshy German brother opened the monastery door in response to my summons. I asked to see Father Schnuttgen. The brother told me he was engaged giving instruction to a lady in one of the parlors. There are in that monastery four parlors or reception-rooms, arranged two on each side of the hall, and at the end of the hall is the grand entrance to the monks' enclosure, and no secular is allowed to cross its threshold. The brother conducted me to a reception-room, on the left-hand side of the entrance from the street, telling me Father Schnuttgen would see me when disengaged. The brother, instead of retiring then, remained to converse with me, remarking that he had not seen me for several weeks, and inquired if I had been ill, because I looked pale. I told him I came near dying, and requested him to pray for me, because I was afraid I had lost my vocation, and could not be saved. He replied, "Oh, yes, you will go to heaven; you are so good, so nice!" He then came near to me, and before I was aware of his intention, stooped down and tried to kiss me, at which I screamed and ran out into the hall. Father Schnuttgen, hearing the scream, came out into the hall, and asked, "What is the matter?" I responded indignantly, pointing to the brother, who stood in the parlor door, "Ask that brother?" Father Schnuttgen took me into the confessional, and in the sternest manner rebuked me. He said I was too particular, and that the brother meant no harm, and that I had sinned grievously by screaming, thereby bringing scandal into the monastery. With an audacity that alarmed me, I told him that I believed priests were all bad, and all they cared for was not to be discovered. I left the confessional without waiting for his absolution, and turned my back on that monastery for ever. This happened the 31st May, 1868.

Father Walsh wished me to leave Coates Street, and reside with his sister, where he could see me often. I declined to leave Mrs. Wilt. He then said, "Sister, you

have left the convent, and are now free; come with me to where we are not known, I will then throw off the priesthood and the Roman Catholic religion. We can get married by a Protestant minister, and in a life-long love and devotion I will try and repair the fearful suffering I have occasioned you." I told him that although I had left the convent, and had discovered the hypocrisy of priests, nevertheless I could not cease to be a Roman Catholic, and as such I could not look upon a Protestant marriage especially to an anointed priest, in any other light than as degradation; and as nothing can justify a woman becoming that most wretched of all beings, I would rather live and die a fugitive. I would rather submit to starvation than ever lead a life of debasement. I told him to drive such thoughts from his mind for ever, because I had taken a resolution to go far away where he could never see me again on earth—a step designed both for his salvation and mine; that I had a cousin who was Lady Abbess of a Presentation Nunnery in Killarney, Ireland, and I would go to her. Bishop Wood, to whom I applied for the means to enable me to go to Ireland, approved of the plan, but enjoined that Father Walsh should pay my expenses there. The Bishop threatened him with the curses of the Church and suspension from his priesthood if he attempted to detain me or place any more temptations in my way. As I had given a large sum of money and the best years of my life to the convent, the Church was bound to provide for me; in that light only, and at the Bishop's command, I consented that Father Walsh should pay my expenses to Ireland, for I was anxious to get away as far as possible from him. I did not mean to enter the convent in Killarney as a nun, but simply to place myself under my cousin's protection, and thus save the Church from scandal. I could not return to my home and break the hearts of my parents by telling the truth, which I could not hide from them, if I returned to their protection. Roman Catholic parents look upon their children's return to the world from the convent as the most terrible disgrace that can



befall them. No matter how much opposed they may have been at the outset to their children entering on the religious life, either as nuns, monks, or priests, once they have embraced that life, and bound themselves, by solemn vows to their Church, they would a hundredfold prefer to see them in their graves than violate their obligations or scandalize the Church. I told Father Walsh that my great desire was to save the Church from scandal, which I could only do by going far away from him. I advised him to enter a monastery and live a life of penance, be faithful to God and his religion, so that we might meet in heaven. He finally gave his consent to this proposition and I made preparations to go to Ireland, and on the 20th of June, in compliance with Father Walsh's request, I sent a telegram to Bessie Murray, his housekeeper, telling her to meet me in the Jersey City Depot at 5 p. m. of that day. She did, and at the request of Father Walsh, took me to the Pacific House, in Greenwich Street, New York. Mrs. Keogh, the housekeeper in that hotel, was an acquaintance of Father Walsh, and he called to see me the next day, introducing me to her as his sister from Philadelphia. I told Father Walsh that I could not go to Ireland without seeing my parents once again, but I would never tell them anything I had suffered. Having requested him to engage my passage to Ireland, I took the Stonington boat for home on the evening of the 21st June, 1868.

Words cannot describe my feelings upon beholding again that home to which six years before I had bade farewell as I thought for ever. Neither can I paint the scene that took place in that home at my return. After long suffering, years of separation, I was once more clasped in my darling mother's arms; and my dear father pressed to his heart his long-absent, and, as he thought, lost (to earth) daughter. I cannot speak of that meeting. Six years before I had left that home in all the happiness, brightness, fervor, hopefulness, trustfulness, and innocence of my girlhood, only to return from the sanctuary of the convent with happiness

wrecked, life blighted, heart crushed, trust betrayed, hope fled, but, thank God, innocence preserved. With that prevarication which I had learnt in the convent, I hid everything from my parents.

My parents were staunch Roman Catholics, and would not believe, except from my own lips, the awful truth. They were consoled by the thought that I was content with convent life—and I would not deceive them; moreover, as Roman Catholics, with all their affection for me, they would rather see me dead than have me abandon a vocation to which they thought I had been specially called by God. Whatever fears they entertained I disarmed by telling them that, in order to acquire greater sanctity, I had permission to retire into a more austere and secluded convent (exchanges are frequently made from an active order of nuns to a cloistered convent), and having obtained the consent of superiors, I had come to see them before I cut off every avenue of further communication with them; and then I left them.

I will not attempt to portray that parting. Ah, my parents; why did you suffer me to leave the protection of your home, to be tossed about in a sea of misery, of persecution, of defamation, of calumny, and of slander? But who could foresee the dangers, the snares and pitfalls, which were set for my destruction, or who conceive the desolation; destitution, and hardships which awaited me? After I parted from the dear ones at home, I went to Boston to see my sister Gertrude. I learned from her that after she had received the letter which brother John had written home about me, on the 20th of November, 1867, the day before he sailed from New York for California, she started on the 17th March, 1868, to see me. She called at St. Joseph's Convent, Jersey City, and inquired for Sister Teresa de Chantal. Sister Aloysius told her she could not see me, because I was at the mother-house in Madison, and, moreover, it being the season of Lent, sisters were forbidden to see their friends. My sister replied she would go to Madison, and demand

to see me, as she was determined not to go back without an interview. Sister Aloysius became alarmed at this expression of perseverance, and finally told her that it was impossible for her to see me, because six weeks before I ran away in the nun's dress, and they had not the slightest clue to my fate. My sister was amazed at the untruthfulness of Sister Aloysius, and she turned from the convent with a sickening horror creeping into her very soul.

Although from conviction Gertrude had ceased to be a communicant in the Roman Catholic Church, she yet thought convents were the abode of women who would not stoop to falsehood. Almost stupified by what she had heard, she could not go to her home and tell her parents that the daughter who had "chosen the better part" was not in the convent, and no clue to her whereabouts existed—therefore she returned to Boston without letting my parents know anything about my disappearance. She suffered alone, while she set the detectives to watch the convents in New Jersey, where she believed I was incarcerated in their dungeons. She did not believe I had escaped as Sister Aloysius told her. I felt that I could not entirely deceive Gertrude, so I told her I had run away from the convent to escape a priest who was tormenting me with professions of love; but I did not breathe to her the crime he attempted. I told her I was going to Killarney to live in the convent with my cousin—and thus I parted with her.

The managers of the convent did not dare to advertise for me, lest it should lead to discoveries which would bring scandal on their community. No effort being made to clear up the mystery, a suspicious silence was left hanging over it all; but the Lord of the Universe has said: "There is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed." They who are chief ministers in such wickedness will yet be divested of their borrowed plumes; and the rottenness and corruption of their system—that whited sepulchre!—shall become a spectacle to angels and to men.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## MY VOYAGE TO IRELAND.

FROM Boston I wrote to Bessie Murray, who met me on the morning of the 10th of July, and took me to the Stevens House, in Broadway, telling me Father Walsh had made every arrangement for my departure on Saturday, the day following. Father Walsh called at the Stevens House Friday noon. I saw him in the ladies' parlor for about one hour. He was very sad, and suffering from neuralgia in the face. He told me Dr. Hays, Sr., of Jersey City, was going to Ireland on a visit, and that he had placed me under his protection in the steamer *Hibernia*, of the Anchor Line. He then left me, saying he would be over in the morning with my ticket and the check for my baggage. On Saturday morning Bessie Murray called me and informed me that Father Walsh was very sick, and it was quite impossible for him to go out in the morning, but that he would accompany Dr. Hays, on the tugboat in the afternoon, and meet me on the steamer. Father Walsh had given Bessie 100 dollars to purchase a first-cabin ticket in the *Hibernia*; but she, impelled by a spirit of malice, for which I could never account, purchased a steerage ticket in the *City of Baltimore*, of the Inman Line, which sailed the same day.

Without suspecting any foul play, I accompanied Bessie, who, instead of taking me on board the *Hibernia*, at Pier 20, North River, took me to Pier 45, and hurried me on board the *City of Baltimore*, assuring me that Father Walsh would come in the tugboat at twelve o'clock, in company with Dr. Hays. Not until the

steamer anchored at quarantine to wait for the tugboat, which was to bring the mail and some cabin passengers, did I discover the fraud that woman had practiced upon me. She had hurried me away from the hotel without a breakfast, and not having partaken of much food since I left Boston, the sea air had sharpened my appetite, and I felt weak with hunger.

From the time I went on board the steamer I sat on the cabin deck alone and desolate. I was attired in the deepest mourning, a long crepe veil concealing my face from the many curious glances directed toward me. I had noticed two priests on board, who watched me closely. Finally one of them drew near, and thus accosted me: "Sister!" At the word sister I gave an involuntary start of surprise. The priest, noticing my confusion, laughed, and said, "I knew by your appearance you were a NUN in disguise, although the Bishop, whom you see over there, would have it that you were a young widow!"

He sat down beside me, and I told him I had run away from the convent.

This priest introduced himself to me as Father Flannery, of New London, Canada, and told me he was going on a visit to his friends in Ireland, in company with his Bishop. He then gave me an introduction to Bishop Walsh, of New London, Canada.

I finally became so faint that I went down to the ladies' saloon to have some lunch. The stewardess, a large, coarse-looking Irish woman, came in, and before she gave me anything to eat, asked to see the number of my berth. I handed her my ticket, not dreaming that it was a steerage passage. When she looked at the ticket, she almost thrust me out of the saloon, at the same time calling, "James, take this woman to the steerage."



"James" came and conducted me down a dark hole where there were assembled a number of poor-looking men, women, and dirty children, with any amount of mattresses, tin cups, and kettles. And what did it all mean? I could not understand why I should be thrust down a steerage, without even a mattress or tin cup necessary to the passage. I ran away in spite of "James," and made my way back to the main deck and told Father Flannery the unaccountable treatment I had received, showing him my ticket. He informed me that the *Hibernia* had just passed us, and then went with me to the ladies' saloon, and made the stewardess give me some lunch. After conversing some time with Bishop Walsh, he advised me to go back on the tugboat if Father Walsh should not come. The tugboat came, but no Father Walsh. Father Flannery escorted me on board the tugboat, and then bade me good-bye. I noticed two more priests among the cabin passengers who went on board the steamer. One of them I recognized as Father McKenna, of New York City, but being deeply veiled he did not recognize me. When I arrived in New York I went back to the Stevens House, and wrote a letter to Father Walsh, demanding an explanation of the events of the day. He came to the hotel on Monday morning, the 13th of July, and I saw him in the parlor; he said Bessie had made a mistake, and secured a ticket for me on the wrong boat; that the cabin passage on the Inman Line was more expensive than the Anchor Line, and she not having money enough had purchased a steerage ticket. He said, further, that it had caused him a great deal of pain and trouble, and that he had sent a large amount of money in gold by the Rev. Father McKenna, of New York, for me, on the *City of Baltimore*, as Bessie had told him the name of the steamer, and that he had also

tried to go on board the tugboat, but was prohibited because he had no pass.

Bessie Murray told me herself afterwards that she had put me on the wrong boat purposely, because she was afraid I would tell Dr. Hays about Father Walsh, and she would "rather put her soul in hell than suffer any harm to come to dear Father Walsh, because *she loved him.*" I was anxious to depart in the first steamer that sailed, therefore on Tuesday afternoon Father Walsh came to the hotel and gave me a cabin ticket in the steamer Propontis, of Tapscot and Brothers, Pier 45, East River. He promised to meet me on board the steamer (which sailed at two p. m.) at twelve o'clock and give me some money in gold. I had lost my baggage, as it had been sent on board the Hibernia, and I was quite destitute, but Father Walsh said he would send Bessie to purchase me a trunk, and some garments ready made, and send then on board the Propontis.

On Wednesday, the 15th of July, 1868, at ten a. m., I left the hotel in a carriage, and went on board the Propontis, there to wait for Father Walsh, who was to come at twelve o'clock. About one half-hour after I embarked, the vessel sailed. Oh, the indescribable despair of that moment! The ship was sailing, and I had no money; no clothes—nothing! In my wild grief I ran to the first man I met, who happened to be the chief steward, and asked him if he would not "please to stop the steamer, or else send me ashore in a boat?" Captain Higginson tried to console me, assuring me that my "friend" would send the money to the office of the company, in Liverpool, England, and I would get it as soon as I arrived. He was sorry the boat sailed before the appointed hour (which was advertised to sail at two p. m.), but it could **not** be avoided, etc., because of the tide. The captain

introduced me to the only lady cabin passenger on board, Mrs. Captain Burnell. I went down into my state room, where I was detained by sea-sickness and physical prostration for thirteen long dreary days and nights. I believe I should have died on that voyage were it not for the kind care of the chief steward, William Matthias. God bless him! he was indeed the Good Samaritan of the vessel to me. Out on the wide ocean without friend or home. Oh, the terrible anguish of a soul, all, all alone!

## CHAPTER XX.

## ALONE IN A FOREIGN LAND: MY RETURN.

ON the 28th of July the steamer *Propontis* sailed into the docks of Liverpool, England. The passengers left the ship, but I remained on board alone. I had no other shelter. I was again cast, poor waif of humanity, on the mercy of strangers. What was I to do? Where to go? Oh, intolerable questions! I had no money, not even a change of linen, and the wide ocean stretched between me and my few friends. There was no help for it. Cold charity must be entreated, reluctant sympathy importuned, and perhaps countless repulses incurred, before my tale of woe would be listened to or one of my wants relieved. Gentle reader, may you never feel what I then felt! may your eyes never shed such scalding, heart-wrung tears! may you never appeal to Heaven in prayers so hopeless and agonized as then left my lips! Never may you experience such a poignant grief, such a forlorn abandonment, which, in that foreign land, overwhelmed me.

The chief steward was the only person who partly understood my forlorn condition, and he was a poor man, with a wife and four children depending on him. To him I made known my intentions. I no longer had the wish to go to Ireland and trust myself to the mercy of the Lady Abbess, who, when she found me in her power, might compel me to take the veil in her nunnery, the walls of which loomed up before my mental vision like a living tomb. I was filled with only one thought, one desire, and that was to return to my home and—die. Mr. Matthias appealed in my behalf to the captain, who kindly promised to take me back to Boston, as he expected to sail for America on the 11th of August. However, in a few days, Capt. Higginson received orders

to sail into the Mediterranean Sea, thus dashing my new-found hope to earth. I told Mr. Matthias I would make known the circumstances of my abject condition to Bishop Goss, the Roman Catholic prelate of Liverpool. Accordingly Mr. Matthias furnished me with a carriage and I proceeded to the palatial residence of Bishop Goss, where I was informed by the gate-keeper that the worthy Bishop was *spending* the summer months in the Isle of Man, the fashionable resort of the *elite*, and that Rev. Dr. Porter, President of the Jesuit College, would supply the Bishop's place during his absence. To Dr. Porter I then proceeded, and was favored with an interview. I made known to him my errand; he refused to give me money for my passage either to Ireland or America, but entreated me to remain in Liverpool and reside in one of his convents. To this I partly consented, as it seemed the only remedy left. "Beggars cannot be choosers," and some shelter would be afforded me in this way at least.

I returned to the ship and told the chief steward the decision I had almost made. Mr. Matthias was a good Presbyterian, and rather than permit me to do what he considered such a wicked thing as condemn myself again to a convent prison, offered to pay my passage back to my friends if I would accept a steerage berth. He said if he could afford it he would gladly send me back in the cabin. From my inmost heart I thanked that good Christian man, and gladly accepted the steerage ticket which he secured for me in the steamship *Siberia*, of the Cunard Line, and he also replenished my wardrobe, which, as the reader already knows, was sadly deficient. Although he had my promise to repay him as far as money could repay such unbounded kindness, which promise I kept, yet William Matthias was actuated by a purely humane and charitable motive; he said that never in his life had he witnessed such suffering as mine in that voyage from New York to Liverpool, and his tender heart pitied me. He will meet his *true reward* from Him



who has promised to reward even for a "cup of cold water" given in His name.

On the 12th of August, 1868, I embarked in the Siberia and turned my face towards home. While the ship was in Queenstown harbor I noticed a priest enter the steerage passage. I knew him to be a priest by his hypocritical and down-looking countenance. No matter under what garments priests appear they have a look peculiar to themselves. He also recognized me as a nun, because convent life imprints upon the human face a peculiar expression which years are required to eradicate. He was in a state of constant intoxication, and the day he came on the steamer he introduced himself to me as Rev. Father Owens, and in the course of conversation confessed that he had been suspended in Ireland, "because he had a great weakness for whisky, and was too fond of the ladies." He showed me a letter from his Bishop, recommending him to some Bishop in America, where his propensities were not known, and he expected to get a church there.

We were out three days from Queenstown when a fearful storm arose, and lasted nearly three days. Who can describe the terror of a storm at sea?—the wild panic, the fearful despair of hundreds of human souls expecting every moment to be launched into eternity? On the 16th of August, near midnight, we were precipitated from our berths into floods of water; the hatchways were open, and the water poured into the steerage, drenching us through; and then the piercing shrieks, the wild confusion, the German clatter, the Irish wail, the cries of children, the shouting of the sailors, the roar of the angry waters, made up a scene which no human pen could adequately paint. And yet I never felt so calm. I had no fear of death. I made one fervent act of contrition to God, and calmly prayed for death: but this was not to be. The storm abated, and the steerage, with its hundreds of human souls, presented a most wretched, miserable, and filthy aspect. I could not partake of the coarse fare furnished there, and I knew not what would

have become of me if I had been compelled to remain in that steerage eight days more. Again God raised up a friend for me in Rev. Mr. Green, a missionary, who was returning with his wife and four little children from a nine years' sojourn in Turkey to his home in Portland, Maine. This gentleman was attracted towards me, and thus addressed me: "Madame, your refined and delicate appearance indicate that you are not accustomed to the hardships of the steerage. I feel that some reverse of circumstances has placed you there. I will speak to the captain, and if he will permit I will take you into the cabin, in order that you may assist my wife, who is now suffering from sea-sickness, in the care of her little ones." And thus I passed the remainder of the voyage in the first cabin.

The *Siberia* sailed into Boston. Mr. Read, the quartermaster, who had been very kind to me, assisted me ashore, placed me in a carriage, and I drove to my sister's house after an absence of six weeks. I answered to my sister's inquiries by pouring into her ears the harrowing details of all my wrongs, trials, and hardships, which I thought she would keep secret in her own heart, and with a true woman's sympathy, shield me from renewed sufferings; but I had not yet drained to the dregs the bitter chalice. Only through the crucible of renewed suffering could I be thoroughly purified from the dross of Romanism.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## THE ARREST OF FATHER WALSH.

It is painful for me to make the remark that Gertrude was atheistical in her views, therefore she was the last one to whom I should have confided my sorrows. A few days after my arrival she left me at her house in Boston, and went home bearing the trail of the serpent into that paradise where there had been peace heretofore, and my father in his anger forbids my name to be mentioned in his house. After this home visit, Gertrude went to Jersey City, and on the 25th of August, 1868, confronted Father Walsh in his own parlor, and wrung from him a confession of his attempted crime. He expressed his deep repentance, told her he was going to join the Order of Dominicans, and had already made arrangements to enter St. Rose's Monastery in Springfield, Kentucky. Gertrude told Father Walsh I was in Boston, although I never intended he should know anything about my fate. She then proceeded to Providence, R. I., there called on Bishop McFarland, and laid the case before him. He told her that Mother Xavier had written to him two letters after my flight, and in both letters stated that I had given entire satisfaction up to the time of my disappearance, but that a few days before I left the convent, I had "manifested symptoms of insanity." At the same time she requested Bishop McFarland to make inquiries if I had gone to my home. Bishop McFarland took notes of my sister's charges, and sent them to Bishop Bayley, of Newark, with an order to suspend Father Walsh from his priesthood. Gertrude then returned to Boston, but I

was entirely ignorant of her movements. She went to the office of Starkweather and Sheldon, criminal lawyers, at 33 School Street, Boston, and engaged their services in a suit against Father Walsh, having the writ made out in my name and without my consent.

On September 7th she went in search of the defendant, and failing to find him at St. Joseph's, she went to Father Corrigan, of St. Peter's Church, in Jersey City, who gave her the address of Father Walsh at Mount Holly, Burlington, N. J., where he was stopping a few days with Father McGahann preparatory to going West. Gertrude told Father Corrigan that she had heard Father Walsh was about to become a monk, but she wished to see him before he went away, as she owed him a *debt*, which she wished to pay. Father Corrigan replied that every one regretted the loss of Father Walsh, as he was such an eminent priest in holiness: in fact, that was the cause of his retiring into a monastery, his nature being too "angelic" to be tainted by the breath of this "impure world." Thus do the Romish priests shield and uphold each other in their wickedness.

Gertrude took the train to Burlington, and arrived at Mount Holly on the evening of the 8th. She found Father Walsh, and made arrangements to meet him on the Wednesday following in Boston, telling him I was ill, and wished to see him. Father Walsh, never suspecting her true motive, promised her that if nothing happened in the interim he would be in Boston on the day appointed. Owing to circumstances which he could not control, he failed to arrive. She again set out in quest of the delinquent, and succeeded in finding him at his sister's, Mrs. Sullivan, South 16th Street, Philadelphia. She appointed a meeting on board the Bristol boat for Boston, at 5 p. m., on Friday, the 18th. In the meantime, Father Walsh went to Mount Holly to make it all right with

Father McGahann for the few days he was to be absent, not by any means telling McGahann his destination, but assuring him that he was going to see the Dominicans in New York.

Gertrude and Father Walsh arrived in Boston on the morning of Saturday, the 19th September. She took him to the Adams House, on Washington Street, where he registered his name, and after shaking hands with him hastened to her lawyers and told them Father Walsh was in Boston, and at the Adams House. A writ, after Gertrude had taken oath to all it contained, was placed in the hands of Deputy Sheriff Merrill. She accompanied this deputy to the Adams House, and pointed out the unsuspecting priest, who was immediately taken in charge and conducted to the Boston Court House.

Gertrude in person went to Father Babst, a particular friend of our family, in order to tell him that she had Father Walsh arrested. (This Rev. John Babst was at that time President of the Boston Jesuit College, but he has since been made Provincial of the Jesuits in the United States and Canada, and at present resides in the Jesuit College, Sixteenth Street, New York.) In the meantime I received the following letter from Father Walsh:—

“SHERIFF’S OFFICE, COURT HOUSE.

“MY DEAR, DEAR SISTER.—Oh, come to your poor helpless friend! I am now under arrest and would not be allowed to see you. Will you come to me for God’s sake? They require bail for my appearance, but how is your cruelly persecuted one to find bail in a strange city to which you alone have attracted me? Oh, sister! remember my love towards you always, and come and let your poor penitent father free. Ah, Gertrude, you have acted the traitor too well! Come and see me, *dear dear*



sister. I cannot realize my dreadful position, and know not what I write. Oh, my God! give me yet a little patience. I have sinned against Thee, dear Lord! Thy *will be done*. Come and see me in this office immediately, dear sister, otherwise I shall be put into the '*den of thieves*.' Come, dear love, and tell me what you want me to do. This is now the '*prayer of the weary one*.' May God and His holy Mother put it into your heart to act again the part of Sister Teresa de Chantal.

"I am, your unfortunate friend,

"W. M. WALSH."

When I received this letter I was petrified with grief and astonishment. I could not weep, although my heart was weeping blood. In calm despair, I accompanied the bearer of the letter to the Court House, and deeply veiled, I entered the sheriff's office, where I beheld Father Walsh, very much depressed and cast down. Gentle reader, pity me in that trying scene, when, for the first time in my life, I entered a sheriff's office, and found it full of men, who all stared at me as I entered. What a position for a shrinking, sensitive woman to be placed in! and what an errand had brought me there! Nothing could have induced me thus to expose modesty than a conscientious duty to avert scandal from the Roman Catholic religion, and to prevent the imprisonment of an anointed priest who had fallen into temptation, but whom I had forgiven.

Father Walsh was not impenitent; he was going to make a life-long atonement for his sins among the austere Order of Dominicans; and although he had sinned knowingly, sinned grievously, yet he implored pardon from his Heavenly Father, who is "ever ready to forgive all who trust in Him, and renounce their evil ways." I told Father Walsh I had nothing to do with his arrest, and I would never give my consent to his imprisonment. The sheriff said I had nothing at all to do with it, as it was my sister who took oath against him.

Gertrude, whose plans were substantially thwarted by Father Walsh's writing to me, and my consequent

appearance in the prisoner's favor, soon after indignantly walked into the sheriff's office, and in sharp tones, before all present, ordered me out of the office in the following words:—"Shame on you! You are not your mother's daughter to conciliate with that poltroon. Do you think a true woman would let such an act go unpunished?" I replied to her, calmly: "A true woman would shrink from publicity in such a case. He has injured himself the most, and conscience will be to him a more salutary punishment than a disgraceful imprisonment. Let him retire into a monastery to do penance and implore forgiveness of God. And now, Gertrude, I am not a minor, and as I am the injured party *I'll forgive him.*" She replied with great vindictiveness, "*I will not forgive him!*" He must go to gaol, that is the St. Rose's convent I have in view for him, and where I trust he will do penance for the next fifteen years. Edith, come away from here."

Father Walsh, of his own free will, confessed the truth to the lawyers and all present, admitted the errors of Rome, and wished to settle the case at once by making me his wife—a proposition to which I could not conscientiously consent, and which I then looked upon with horror. The lawyers, Starkweather and Sheldon, were very courteous, and sympathized with me, but as the case could not be settled that day in any other way except that suggested by Father Walsh, they had to commit him to the Suffolk Gaol.

The next day, which was Sunday, Rev. Father Bapst and Rev. Father Supple, of Charleston, visited him in the gaol, and in the afternoon they settled the case by paying the sum of \$300 into the hands of the lawyers. I did not know Father Walsh was released until Monday morning; and Gertrude was so enraged with me because I had broken up the suit that she uttered the bitter remark, "I'll have revenge if I wade through hell to get it! and I'll go to my father, secure his power of attorney, and have Walsh re-arrested in the criminal court of New Jersey, and there you will have no power to

interfere." I was not aware at that time that my parents were entirely ignorant of Gertrude's proceedings, and knew nothing of the arrest of Father Walsh. My father would never have consented to it if he had known her intentions. Fearing she would carry out her threat, and being then a staunch Roman Catholic, I was actuated by the one motive to save the Church from scandal, therefore with fifty dollars which Gertrude had previously given me, I went in pursuit of Father Walsh, to tell him to leave at once the State of New Jersey. On my way I called on Bishop McFarland, and told him what Gertrude had done in causing Walsh's arrest, and of the threat she had made. He approved of my object in warning Walsh of his danger, and then he advised me to at once retire into a cloistered convent, and gave me the last letter which he had received from Rev. Mother Xavier after my escape from her convent, wherein she inquired of the Bishop concerning my fate. This letter bore such high testimony to my exemplary conduct in the convent, that the Bishop said it would be of great use to me if I should act upon his advice. I arrived at Father McGahann's, Mount Holly, Tuesday, September 22nd, at four p. m. Father McGahann was surprised to see me, and at first failed to recognize me, as it was the first time he had met me since I left the convent, and was ignorant of my escape. Father McGahann had not seen Father Walsh since the 18th, but was expecting him back from the Dominicans in New York, whither he had gone to make arrangements for his departure West [the excuse he gave him for his absence before proceeding to Boston].

I saw Father McGahann knew nothing of the events that had taken place, and I could not inform him. He asked me to wait until the next day, and if Father Walsh did not come then he would give him up. I went to the Davis Hotel, Mount Holly, and remained all night suffering much anxiety of mind lest Father Walsh had been re-arrested. The question which troubled me was, Why had he not arrived in Mount Holly, as he had left Boston

twenty-four hours in advance of me? In the morning I went to Father McGahann's church to Mass, after which he invited me to breakfast with him. About 9 a. m., while we were conversing in the parlor, Father Walsh made his appearance—dejected, downcast, and unshaven. Father McGahann was very much surprised by the deplorable aspect Father Walsh presented, and thus accosted him:—

“Well, William, what has happened to you? Here is Sister Teresa de Chantal, who has been waiting since yesterday to see you. What kept you?”

“Well, James, if you must know what happened to me, I have been in gaol.”

“In gaol, William! Arrah, what brought you to gaol, and what gaol were you in?”

“To tell you the truth, James, I hardly know what gaol myself; all I can tell you is that I put up in the Boston Gaol Saturday, breakfasted and dined there on Sunday, settled my account at the gaol Sunday evening, and here I am now, James, more dead than alive—or is it dreaming I am?”

“Faix, we are both dreaming, I think,” said Father McGahann, falling back in his chair in dismay.

“Will you tell me, William, what you were doing in Boston? Sure it's with the Dominicans I thought you were; what in the *wide, wide* world took you to Boston at all?”

“Sister Teresa de Chantal's sister took me there.”

“Is it the stylish young lady that was here the other day?”

“Yes, James, that little fly of a woman in the brown silk walking suit.”

“Arrah, Billy! what made you go with her? Musha, may the devil shoot her! But she is smart to hoist you off to Boston Gaol, and may the devil hikers you for going with her! But we are all fixed now in earnest! Come, William, tell me all about it, for God's sake!”

Whereupon Father Walsh tearfully confessed all to Father McGahann, expressing the most sincere regret for

all the suffering he had occasioned me. I then explained to Father Walsh why I was there, requesting him to leave the State of New Jersey without delay, because of Gertrude's threat.

Both the priests were alarmed, and Father McGahann hurried Father Walsh away, while I was to remain in Mount Holly until Father McGahann returned. However, at the station they met Fathers Sheehan and Fitzsimmons, who were posting down in hot haste with a report of Father Walsh's arrest, which had appeared in the *New York Tribune* of September 22nd, 1868. They all returned together to the house, and Father Walsh showed me a mutilated and very inaccurate report of the case which had got into the newspaper. In self defense, and for the sake of common truth, honesty, and justice to all concerned, I was compelled to write a letter, pointing out the false and scandalous character of many of the allegations which had found their way into the *Tribune*, sent it to the editor of that journal by the Rev. Father Sheehan, and it appeared on the morning of September 25th, 1868. More than this, to defend me from the oblique aspersions cast upon me by the unscrupulous writer of the mendacious article, Father Walsh, in the presence of Fathers McGahann, Sheehan, and Fitzsimmons, proclaimed me to be the purest-minded woman he had ever met; he expressed the deepest sorrow for all the suffering he had occasioned me, and before all present confessed he loved and esteemed me then, if possible, more than ever, and imploring my pardon, we parted forever.

On the 25th of September, 1868, I saw Father Walsh for the last time. The next day Father McGahann sent me to Baltimore, giving me the name of Agnes Barry, and telling me that under an assumed name and in a strange city, I could get a school to teach from some of the priests. September 28th I stopped at Barnum's Hotel, Baltimore, and the next day I was directed by the Jesuits to a boarding-house at 132 North Calvert Street, where, as a transient boarder, I paid two dollars per day.



I went to several priests seeking a situation as teacher, but in vain. My money nearly all gone, I wrote to Father McGahann, and received the following letter in reply:—

“MOUNT HOLLY, N. J., September 31st, 1868.

“DEAR SISTER.—I received your letter today, and really it pained me very much—O God! I FEAR YOU ARE FALLING AWAY FROM THE ONLY TRUE CATHOLIC FAITH. Oh, dear girl! pray to God to drive such temptations from your mind. I would suggest that you enter upon some devotion—say the ‘thirty-days’ prayer’—that God, through the intercession of our Blessed Lady, might free you from such temptations. Should you commence this prayer, let me know the time, and I will pray for you in my Masses. About looking out for a school, I think you have been too hasty. You should remain quiet for the present, and do everything after quiet consideration. Do not give yourself any further uneasiness about poor Father Walsh, as, thank God, he is on his way to where he cannot possibly be found out; and I hope God will give him grace to repent of the path he has taken in causing you so much suffering, and in bringing scandal upon the Church of God. I have not heard much about the matter since. Father Sheehan has been with me assisting me at the Triduum, and has told me that all the papers copied the contradiction, and commented largely on the affair. He requested that you make an affidavit in confirmation of the statements in the contradiction. You will then please write out the contradiction, and go before some magistrates, and swear to the truth of what you have written, and send it to me. Do not forget this, but do it without delay. I will send you letters of recommendation next week, which will be time enough for you. The quieter and more retired you keep yourself for the present, the better. I hope you will consider the necessity of again retiring into the convent. Father Renahan has taken to his bed, and is inconsolable. Father Hogan is frantic; has written to me twice the same day. Oh, dear child! it is a blow

which has withered many hearts. Write often to me, and I will send you every news.

"Yours very truly in Jesus Christ,

"J. J. McGAHANN."

After receiving the above letter, I put the following advertisement in the *Baltimore Sun*:—

"An accomplished young lady wishes a situation as Governess or Lady's Companion. Address Agnes Barry, 132 North Calvert Street."

The same day about two p. m. an elegant carriage drove up to the door, and a magnificently dressed lady of about middle age inquired for Agnes Barry. This lady said she had seen my advertisement, and as she needed a companion or lady's-maid she had answered it. I told her I expected letters of recommendation from a Roman Catholic priest in a few days. She replied very graciously, "Your face is all the recommendation I need," at the same time requesting me to accompany her then in her carriage, and gathering together my scanty wardrobe, I complied, thanking God in my inmost soul that I had succeeded in getting a position.

We alighted at an elegant mansion in an aristocratic-looking neighborhood. The lady, who seemed extremely affable, conducted me into a luxurious chamber which she told me was to be mine. She requested me to take some rest, as she would not require my services that day, and then retired with the excuse that several visitors were awaiting her in the drawing-room. I knelt down to thank God for the blessing of a comfortable home. About an hour after the lady had left me, I was astonished to see an elderly and somewhat clerical-looking man enter my chamber. At first I thought he was the lady's husband who had entered the room without knowledge of my presence there. However, I was doubly surprised when he came and sat down on the sofa where I sat reading a book, and gliding his arm round my waist, made use of language which sent the blood tingling through my veins with indignation. I sprang from the sofa and demanded to know what he meant, and why

was I there to be thus insulted? He replied, "So then you are ignorant of the character of this house?" I told him I only knew that I had been engaged by a lady there as companion; but suspicion that I had been ensnared to a *maison d'infamie* crossed my mind, and paralyzed my senses with unspeakable horror. I went to the door to find it locked, as unperceived by me he had sprung a secret spring when he entered. "O God! have mercy upon me and save me!" I ejaculated, and kneeling down in a voice of heartrending supplication, I addressed the following to the Blessed Virgin: "Remember, O most holy Virgin, that no one ever had recourse to thee without finding relief. O come to my assistance, most immaculate Virgin, and save your child from defilement! Remember, O most holy Mother, that I am the consecrated spouse of thy divine Son. O holy Mother, save me!"

While I repeated this prayer that man stood aloof from me, and when I finished, he said, "Are you a Catholic and a consecrated Virgin?" I looked at him, and with lightning-like rapidity the thought flashed through my mind that he was a Roman Catholic priest. I arose from my knees, and confronting him, I replied, "I am a Catholic, and *you, sir*, are a Roman Catholic priest. I am a consecrated Virgin, and on account of priestly depravity I ran from the convent, and am out on the wicked world without a friend or home; and oh, sir, if you possess one spark of humanity, if there is any truth or virtue in the Catholic Church or a particle of chivalry in its priesthood, *YOU, A PRIEST OF THAT FAITH*, will open those doors, and let me depart unsullied!" He looked at me in surprise, and his quivering lips denoted he was deeply moved, while he exclaimed, "My God, have I come to this? Child, put on your bonnet, and depart as you came." He then accompanied me to the hall door, and held it open while I passed out, at the time saying, "PRAY FOR US PRIESTS."

I found myself in a strange part of the city, and with the greatest difficulty I again made my way back to North Calvert Street. I could scarcely realize the fate I

had so miraculously escaped through the treachery of that degraded woman. Was it possible that one of my own sex could fall so low? Woman when pure and good is the most beautiful of God's creatures, but there is nothing in hell or earth so vile as a degraded woman. Oh, woman, woman, why destroy the beautiful handiwork of thy Creator, by making yourself a fiend incarnate! I was so inexperienced in the ways of the world that I never suspected the existence of such degradation. I resolved never again to advertise for a position.

I had ten dollars left, and with that I left Baltimore, and as I had no one else to go to, I went to Father McGahann, whom I found in great trouble, on account of another malignant and lying report which had appeared in the *New York Tribune* of October 6th, 1868, communicated by a Boston correspondent, who was either entirely ignorant of the facts of the case, or a malicious inventor of falsehoods. I blamed Gertrude for allowing such falsehoods to appear. If the statements had been only truthfully made, I would not have felt such poignant grief, but the thought that a sister, whose duty it was to shield and protect me, should open afresh the gaping wounds of my bleeding heart, was overwhelming in itself. Her aim in making the matter public was chiefly to show up the secret crimes of the priests, but, for her sister's sake at least, why did she not see that the statements published were truthful?

No matter what way I turned, I seemed to be beset by new sorrows, and each trial seemed greater than the preceding one. Thus pressed down upon all sides, I was overwhelmed in an accumulation of sorrows. Is it strange that I could not always realize that there was a just God who even then sustained me in His everlasting arms, and who one day directed that I would triumph over all my enemies, and my exaltation exceed the depths of humiliation through which for a time He permitted me to wade

## CHAPTER XXII.

## ABDUCTION TO A CLOISTERED CONVENT.

FATHER MCGAHANN advised me to go to New York, and write from there to him, directing my letter to St. Peter's Church, Grand Street, Jersey City, whither he decided to go, because he could not endure the mortification of remaining any longer in Mount Holly, and he would then see what could be done for me. Accordingly, I went to New York, and not having much money, I engaged a room at the Stevens House, which was conducted on the European plan. Being known there, I was not required to pay for my room in advance. I wrote to Father McGahann, but received no answer. I wrote again; still no reply. I could not understand why he should thus abandon me, without money or friends.

I had been nearly one week at the Stevens House, and had not money enough left to pay for another meal in the restaurant, and as a last resort, I sent a telegram to Gertrude, requesting her to send me some money, as I was starving. I did not think she would act so unsisterly as to refuse the appeal of a broken-hearted, destitute sister. Instead of money, I received a most unfeeling letter, asking how I dared apply to her for money, and why did I not "go to my Bishops and Archbishops of Babylon?"

After I received this unkind letter from Gertrude, all hope sank within me. I had not tasted food for two days, and was suffering the pangs of hunger. I lost all hope and faith in God. I cried out in the despair of my heart, "There is no God; there is no justice, no eternity!" I resolved to commit self-destruction, and made preparations to that effect by writing letters to Father McGahann and Gertrude, which I sealed and directed, and put in my pocket, with another letter, bearing the



superscription, "To be opened when I am dead." I borrowed 25 cents from the clerk of the hotel, crossed the ferry into Jersey City, went into a drug store, and called for arsenic, which they refused to give me. I tried another pharmacy, and succeeded in getting an ounce of laudanum; and then, in the shade of the evening, I walked to St. Joseph's and tried to get into the church, intending to be found dead in the Sanctuary. The church was locked. I then went into Father Venuta's kitchen, very much to the surprise of Bessie Murray, whom I asked for the keys of the church. She refused to give them to me, and, then exclaiming, "It will do just as well here," I drained the contents of the phial before her. She ran in dismay to inform Father Venuta, who took his hat and cane and left the house precipitately, for fear of being arrested if I were found poisoned in his house. However, Fathers Sheehan and Fitzsimmons, who were spending the evening with him, remained; but a merciful God intervened, and saved me from myself, although in that moment I had denied that He existed, else I would never have attempted such an act.

I had taken too much laudanum, consequently, it did not remain in my stomach; but I became very sick, and Father Venuta ordered that I should be removed, because I was too well known there, and it would bring too much scandal on the Church. I was sent to Mrs. Ford's, in South Second Street, Jersey City. Mrs. Ford was a poor widow, and in my sickness was very kind to me. Father Senez, the ex-Jesuit, seeing that the sympathies of the people were with me, and that they condemned the priest, sent Mr. Halliard, of South Fifth Street, his head man, with a carriage, and under the pretense of taking me for a drive to Central Park, drove me to the Cloistered Convent in Manhattanville; forcibly conveyed me from the carriage and shut me up in that austere convent; and what my fate would have been I dare not think—if God in His mercy had not touched the heart of the Lady Superior. On the fourth day of my incarceration in her

convent, while I was on my knees pleading with her to grant me my freedom, she said, "I have been a nun for seventeen years, and have committed many sins through blind obedience, but if I can atone for any of them by giving you your freedom I will, for I cannot be so merciless as to keep you here to suffer the cruel fate in reserve for you, although I know Archbishop McCloskey will penance me severely for disobeying him." She also said—"if I were back in my dear France, where I was seventeen years ago, and if I knew then what I know now of convent life, I never would have entered a convent, where my life has been a 'hell upon earth ever since.'" Therefore, in the evening of the fourth day this kind but unhappy Lady Superior opened the convent doors for me, and also gave me ten dollars (two pounds). Although I was losing confidence in the truth of the Roman Catholic religion, I could not throw off its yoke with its train of errors and superstition, until the Lord severed the chains. Yet I felt my soul plunging down into the black sea of infidelity. As day without the glorious sun would be an endless night, so also the soul of man without a God is an endless hell. Although I was sinking deep down into the gloom of infidelity, I could not save myself—and could man save me from that frightful gloom? No, no, their efforts were fruitless. But there was an Almighty Arm stretched out, and it dragged me up, up, from the darkness—step by step, and I am saved at last, and rejoice in a new existence.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## MY JOURNEY ON FOOT FROM BALTIMORE TO PHILADALPHIA.

WEIGHED down on every side, I knew not where to turn. I could not go to friends; they had all forsaken me. I could not go to strangers; they would suspect and repulse me. I could not go to my home; its doors were unjustly closed against me. I could not go to God; I felt that I was losing all faith and hope in Him. "Oh, ye who pass by the way, come and see if ever sorrow was like unto mine," was the wail of my bleeding heart.

In the midst of my depression and doubt, and as a last resource, I thought of going again to Bishop Wood, Philadelphia, with the hope that he would assist me, by providing an honorable situation for me, which would enable me to earn a living.

Bishop Wood said he would write to Archbishop Spalding, in Baltimore, and ask him to give me a secular school to teach there, where I would not be so much in danger of being recognized. Bishop Wood paid my fare to Baltimore, and when I arrived at the eminent Archbishop's palatial residence I had only 25 cents in my purse. I did not think he would refuse to befriend me; but the discovery was soon made. In the most forlorn desolation I had sought the head of the Church in America, only to find him a whitened sepulchre—rottenness to the core.

I confessed to Archbishop Spalding all I had suffered in the convent and out of it. I asked him if he would give me a school to teach as a secular teacher, telling him that I was an entire stranger in the city, that I had only 25 cents in my possession, but that I had all confidence in him. He said, "Yes, my child, I will give you a school to teach, but it will be in the convent. As the head of the Church, I will not have the sin upon my soul to allow you to live in the world when it is your vocation to live in the

convent. Every day that you are out of the convent you are in danger of bringing one of the most TERRIBLE SCANDALS upon the Holy Church that ever came upon it in this country. Therefore, I will force you into it, if necessary!" I then arose to leave his house, when he said, "I would never allow you to leave my sight until I saw you safe and fast within a convent; but I want to *punish* you—to humble you—to teach you a lesson you will never forget, for before twenty-four hours have gone over your head you will come back to me and beg of me to receive you into the convent; for you will have found out by that time that you cannot live long in Baltimore on 25 cents!" Archbishop Spalding afterwards confessed that it was the one thing he most repented of, that he ever allowed me to leave his sight until he had seen me safely in the convent.

The most hardened man of the world would have had more sympathy for me in my friendless, penniless, unprotected condition than Archbishop Spalding. He gloried in my poverty. Through starvation he was to humble me, and force me into a nunnery. He knew well that it is not an easy thing for a human creature to die of starvation, therefore, believing me to be completely in his power, he thought I would gladly return to the convent rather than submit to such an awful fate; but he did not know whom he had to deal with, for I would prefer to suffer any physical death rather than the living death in a convent.

My heart became steeled against the Roman Catholic Church. I had put it to the test, and it was found wanting. I would rather die with hunger or perish with cold than again seek relief or protection from its hardened priests.

With regard to seeking employment I was as ignorant as a babe; having been buried in a convent, I knew scarcely anything of the ways of the world. Soul-sick and weary, I knew not what to do, where to go, or how to find rest. With a hopeless heart and fainting frame I rang the door bell of an aristocratic-looking mansion, and in faltering accents inquired if they needed any help. "No, we do not," greeted me from one of the class called

menial; while at the second place where I mustered up courage enough to knock, a look of suspicion, a cold shake of the head, and the door silently closed upon me, were all the response my timid question received. Meanwhile, the night was advancing, while I aimlessly wandered through the city like a lost sheep, and at length, with an awful sense of desolation, a total prostration of hope, I turned away from the streets of Baltimore without a thought of what would become of me.

To die of starvation and cold is a fate to which nature cannot passively submit. I strayed from the city, and when the shades of night fell upon the earth, I found myself on a solitary road near the forest, which seemed to offer me an inviting shelter, and I felt that I would die in the depth of a wood rather than on the frequented streets of the city. To the forest, then, I turned and on that chilly autumn night I found repose on Nature's breast, laying my trembling, aching frame down to rest on a bed of withered leaves, under the open canopy of heaven. With despairing eyes I gazed upon the countless myriads of stars, and reflected on the might and strength of Him who hath formed them—and after a while a feeling of hope and faith revived in my tortured heart and I felt that God would save me. "The Son of Man had not whereon to lay His head," why, then, need I fear? Was I not more like Him? and the thought brought peace. When the soul feels isolated from creatures it often draws nearer to God; and as I lay that night in the open air, a poor forsaken child of earth, I experienced a dim flash of that heavenly light which was afterwards to irradiate abundantly my entire being.

Morning dawned. The glorious sun filled earth and sky. I arose from my hard couch and looked round me. Everywhere was sunshine. The trees were gorgeously beautiful in their rich autumnal hues. I wished to remain in the forest and never leave it. I envied the birds which sang so sweetly on the tree-tops. I would fain at that moment have become one of them, that I might have found nourishment and shelter there. But



I was a human being, and as such could not remain there to die. Where should I turn? To Philadelphia. I could then go to Mrs. Wilt; she would not refuse to shelter me and assist me to find employment. But it was a long, long way to Philadelphia, about 96 miles, and I had no money to pay my expenses thither. What was I to do? I would walk. I could only fail and perish in the attempt; nevertheless, I would try.

With want and hunger staring me in the face I set out on that long walk from Baltimore to Philadelphia. Reader, it is too painful for me to recall and dwell upon all the incidents of that journey; they would fill a volume were I to recount minutely how, in many places, I was repulsed and looked upon with suspicion and distrust when, driven by the pangs of hunger, I solicited a crust of bread with which to sustain my unhappy life. Some would respond to my appeal with as much humanity as they might manifest towards a starving dog; while others would more humanely and in greater abundance give me some "cold victuals," at the same time asking me numerous impertinent or quizzical questions. To the latter I made little or no reply, because I could not enter into the recital of all the trials which beset me, and which, to strangers, would seem incredible, and excite unpleasant suspicions. During twelve long nights I sought repose in the open air, and when the inclemency of the weather once drove me to a cottage to seek shelter from the storm, the door was shut in my face with the words, "we cannot harbor strangers." O God! with what poignant arrows my sensitive soul was pierced by such unkindness from my fellow-beings, whom I thus found even more unfeeling and selfish than the brute creation. When tired, and struggling against hunger, I stretched forth my hand for aid and succor, only to be rudely thrust back upon the bleak desolation of a *cold, cold* world.

We have many Christian maxims beautiful in theory, but how little are they practiced! Where are the kind shepherds who seek the tired wandering lamb, tenderly bind up the bleeding wounds, and lovingly lead it into

the fold? The good shepherds—rather wolves in sheep's clothing—of the Roman Catholic Church were feasting and carousing in their palatial homes, while I was driven forth to starve. "Come unto Me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I will refresh you; and ye weary of heart, and I will give you rest." This is the spirit of the Christian's Lord, and how beautiful were it practised! But the world says the contrary; it says, "Come unto me, and I will heap upon you opprobrium, reproach, and re- crimination; taunting, reviling, deriding, and persecuting you." Is it not the voice of a selfish world? Would I might deny it! but my heart has harrowed through its depths; my eyes have watered its furrows with the lamentations that have gone up from my soul in despair!

When, footsore, I arrived at the Susquehanna River, and wearily wandered along its banks until I came to a town where I succeeded in begging my way across. I often strayed from the right course, and then would inquire of some humble-looking farmer the straight road to Philadelphia. I was often tempted to commit suicide, and at once put an end to my misery. Oh, how often I sank by the roadside fainting from physical prostration! how often in very despair I was on the point of laying my weary body down to die, only to rise again and rally my sinking energy to reach the desired goal! Each trial I suffered was in itself well nigh sufficient to break some human heart. To be cast out and suffer a living death from parents and relations; to have the heart's truest, purest love betrayed, and highest confidence misplaced; to be abandoned by every friend on earth; to suffer the cruel injustice of base calumny and unmerited persecution; to be without shelter or food, a wandering, starving, homeless child of grief, without even the consolation of a true religion, seemed indeed an incredible amount of sorrow for one weak woman to endure; and yet such was the accumulation of sorrow heaped upon me, such a sea of trouble in which I was deluged.

Ah, dear readers, how many of you would not think the burden of one of those sorrows greater than you could

bear! Truly the hand of God was laid heavily upon me, but it was done in love. As there are some flowers whose fragrance can only be exhaled by pressure, so there are souls whose purity and virtue cannot send out their good odor except by the weight of suffering—the presence of Infinite Love. My recollections of life have indeed been fraught with weariness and pain, but so that my heart might at last reach forth to God; and it now holds truth still more sacred for its scarcity. I would not have it otherwise, and bless the Hand which hath chastened me. And as He hath permitted me to see the darkness and the desolation, so doth He now permit me to see the peace and purity of holiness—that sweet calm which never comes but to the God-born heart, and to the soul that has passed from suffering to sanctity—from a living crucifixion and unentombed martyrdom, to the perfect peace “which passeth understanding.”

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## MY CONVERSION.

WEARY and way-worn, I at last arrived in Philadelphia, having been twelve days on the road. I went to Mrs. Wilt, 1336, Coates Street, who kindly took me in until I was able to seek employment, and which I found in less than two weeks in a most providential manner. Being afraid to advertise after the experience I had in that line, I was advised to go to an intelligence office. Accordingly, I started out to find one, and was directed to 736, Arch Street. I entered, however, the wrong building, and was surprised to find myself in a phrenological gallery. An affable and venerable-looking man, with flowing silvery beard and hair, approached me, wishing to know if I desired to have a phrenological chart and description of character. To this I replied in the negative, at the same time apologizing for the intrusion. I told him my errand, and was about to retire to the office indicated to me, when he requested me to be seated, that he might have an opportunity to study my head scientifically. I did so. He then proceeded to enumerate in phrenological language the different qualities he discovered, among them, "unusual powers of oratory, elocution, penmanship," etc. After he had finished his delineation of my character, he said that his lady amanuensis was ill, and he thought I was fully competent to take her place, and he greatly desired that I should do so. Accordingly I engaged with Professor W. B. Elliott in the capacity of amanuensis, at a salary of six dollars (twenty-four shillings) a week. Here I remained during

my sojourn in Philadelphia, a little over six months.

I was fortunate enough to get board with a widow lady and her invalid grand-daughter. Mrs. Thomas was a Southern lady, who had met with many reverses through the War; was very respectable, though humble; and with her I was made to feel at home during the remainder of my stay in Philadelphia.

My heart had not as yet been touched with a live coal from the altar of God. My soul had not as yet emerged from darkness into celestial light—but the time was near at hand. I felt it a necessity to attend church, and through force of habit went to the Roman Catholic church; but whenever I entered it I felt a sense of terror take possession of my soul. I could not kneel or bow down to those empty pagan forms. One Sunday in April, 1869, I witnessed Bishop Wood, in his golden vestments, mitre and crozier, administer the sacrament of Confirmation in the Cathedral of Philadelphia. With a new light I looked upon the falsity and hollowness of its forms and ceremonies; they appeared to me like the aimless play of children, or the gorgeous pastime of fools. I was a child no longer, therefore I could not be satisfied with this empty farce of religion, and in a sweat of agony I turned away, with the resolve never again to enter a Roman Catholic church. I afterwards visited Protestant churches of all denominations. I even attended spiritual circles and quaker meetings, and finally began to think that all religious systems were vain. Thus like a vessel cut loose from its moorings, without helm or guide, I wandered awhile upon the sea of doubt and uncertainty, and were it not for the infinite mercy of Almighty God rank infidelity must have been my ultimate refuge.

Who can describe the awful danger of such a position? I saw myself like a lonely mariner far off on the boundless ocean at midnight, when the raging tempest conceals



the heavens from sight; when, crying for help and no encouraging voice responds, no friendly aid is afforded, despair takes hold of the soul. But Christ was on the ship, and soon His voice was heard stilling my tempest-tossed soul with his potent words, "Peace, be still!" and the troubled waters became calm. My mind had been so harassed with doubt, so cruelly agitated by conflicting thoughts and ineffectual attempts to discover the true faith, that I had formed the desperate purpose of embracing no particular form of Christianity until the hour of death; but God was watching over me. His hand was extended to withdraw my feet from the brink of the precipice.

This soul-conflict lasted from April until August, 1869, when Gertrude relented and invited me to Boston. It was while visiting a friend of my girlhood days, a Roman Catholic lady in that city, that my conversion took place. Not in a church, not by human eloquence, but in my chamber, at the midnight hour, and by the mighty eloquence of God alone, were the enemies of my soul put to flight, and the power of darkness dispelled. The King came to take His throne in my heart, filling it with triumph, joy, and gladness. The Deliverer came as my defence, my shield, and strength and salvation, in this world and the next! God hath saved my soul "from death, my eyes from tears and my feet from falling." But how can I describe the awful agony, the death struggle which heralded the glorious Sun of the light of God as it ascended the awful East, and dispersed with its wonderful effulgence the deep darkness of my soul! The day of the Lord dawned for me on the 29th of August, 1869: the awakening was very bright and sudden. All day on the 29th my spirit seemed unusually weighed down by gloom and aridity. My friend, who was the wife of a wealthy Protestant gentleman,

who disliked Romanism, became so alarmed for my soul's salvation, that she went over to the Jesuit College for one of the Jesuits to come and converse with me. A great controversialist came to see me, and remained until ten o'clock in the evening trying to persuade me to return to the Church. I then retired to my chamber, I could not sleep, I walked the floor in the agony of soul that I endured. I reviewed all the years of my life, which passed like a panorama before my mental view, and acknowledged before God that He knew I had always acted conscientiously to the light He had given me, but instead of blessing me for it He had led me through such terrible trials and persecutions. At this thought my darkened soul was filled with rebellion, so that I murmured against, even cursed God, when suddenly I seemed to be completely overpowered by the majesty and greatness of God. What! I, an insignificant atom of mortality, dare to reproach my Creator? to rebel against my God? Fearful thought! and with consciousness of my own nothingness I sank on my knees and thus prayed: "O Father in heaven, forgive me for my blasphemous and rebellious thought against Thee! let Thy blessed light shine upon me! deliver me from darkness. Hear me, my God, for Christ's sake!" Like a flash of burning fire those words shot from my heart, and a dazzling light filled the room, and a clear voice rang through my soul, distinctly saying, "Daughter of sorrow and darkness, arise and shine: Thy sins are all forgiven. Go forth and teach the world the lesson you have been taught."

I trembled with awe; the old spirit left me, and the glorious light of God burst with dazzling brightness upon my weary, darkened spirit. A thousand years seemed to have rolled over it in the darkest desolation, and *now*, *now*, what splendor, joy, and heavenly bliss! My shackles had fallen, and celestial light flooded my inmost soul with the healing stream of salvation. Jesus pressed me to His bosom and sealed me for ever His own.

Not only did my soul emerge out of darkness, but my

whole body seemed changed. I felt like a new creature—every desire was purified. I could scarcely refrain from crying out with the joy that was in my heart—that heart which had been so long acquainted only with sorrow and grief—that heart which had been blindly sacrificed on the altar of self-immolation to procure this heavenly peace, which, by the power and mercy of God, had at last filled it. Oh, the unspeakable rapture, the glorious ecstasies of my new-born soul!

Reader, it is not in the power of language to fully describe the joy and peace of the soul which emerges from darkness into light, and is united with Christ. Such happiness is far better felt than told. All murmuring and rebellion fled from my mind. I thanked God for every trial, for every persecution and humiliation I had endured. I was resigned to the Divine will to suffer as long, and in whatever manner, my Master pleased. With Jesus it is sweet to remain on the summit of Calvary, where, removed from the world, the soul is alone with a dying God. It grasps the Cross, and feels the warm atoning blood of Christ purifying, cleansing, regenerating. Oh, the joy of the soul united to Christ, clinging to the Cross, washed in the atoning blood! I had passed from death to life. My heart went out to God with a yearning desire to proclaim to the world His mercy, power, and goodness to me. His heavenly strength filled my soul in rich streams, which shall go out to heal and save others. Merciful God, at last I possess Thee! Kindest, dearest, tenderest Friend, every affection of my nature is absorbed in Thee! Hush, my soul, I cannot speak it; tongues of angels cannot express the treasure of peace and contentment in Jesus.

Christian reader, how many there are who have not realized that heaven begins when, silent from all the world, we again and again repeat the sweet name of Jesus, Jesus! And how many there are who say that adored name looking beyond Him while looking for Him! How many He is hidden from by the delusive staging of superstitious forms and ceremonies! Which

of us, having once tasted how sweet the Lord is, can but think with sorrow and anguish of the blind, cold, comfortless worship of which they partake who know not the treasure of faith and salvation in Christ alone?

Dear Roman Catholic readers, blinded in delusion, weary with sin and sorrow, come with me and taste how sweet Christ is. Throw off your weight of forms and superstitions; approach the sacred fountain of Jesus' blood, where, wrapped in His love, covered with His righteousness, your misguided souls and weary hearts will be filled with heavenly love, joy, peace, and contentment! Oh, heavenly bliss! delight past all expression! how consoling, how sweet the presence of Jesus to the longing, harassed soul! It is instant peace, and balm to every wound.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## MY WORK.

ONE of the signs of a perfect conversion is a great zeal to convert others; and with this desire my heart was filled. I felt that the words, "Go, teach the world the lesson you have been taught," had a peculiar meaning to me; therefore I was deeply impressed with the conviction that my Divine Master had appointed to me a great work, but in what particular sphere it was to be carried out occurred to me in a most singular manner. My friends were deeply astonished at the unexpected change manifested in me. Peace illuminated my countenance, which had so long been clouded with grief. A smile replaced the deep lines which sorrow had drawn round my mouth. Heavenly joy shone from eyes accustomed to heart-wrung tears.

The next morning after my wonderful conversion, I told the friend whom I was visiting that the cause of my happiness was the grace of a change of heart. I had found that in Christ for which I had elsewhere sought vainly for years. At last I had the assurance in my soul that my sins were all forgiven through the merits of Christ *alone*. I told her that I also felt that I had a great work to do. To her question, "Edith, what are you going to do?" I replied without a moment's pre-mediation, "I am going to lecture." I was amazed at my own words. Lecture! impossible. *I*, a weak, timid woman, and naturally retiring, could never face assembled multitudes in order to teach the world the bitter lesson Rome had taught me; for well I knew that from Luther



to the present no one had ever stood forth in God's strength to expose the errors of Rome, but had been persecuted and martyred; therefore, knowing my life would be endangered and my reputation assailed, I shrank from such a thought; but the more I tried to banish the suggestion as preposterous, the more vividly it forced itself upon me as being the will of God, and if so I would hazard my life in its fulfilment. God in all ages hath chosen "the weak ones of the earth to confound the mighty." I knew that of myself I could do nothing, but "I could do all things through Him who strengthened me." God had prepared me for His work through the fiery crucible of untold tribulation, therefore I rose in the strength and majesty of God to do His will.

My nature shrank from all the opposition, danger, slander, and persecution I must encounter in the performance of such a task; nevertheless, like clay in the hands of the potter, I was subservient to what I felt to be the good pleasure of God. The desire to lecture strengthened every hour, until I seemed consumed with it; accordingly I resolved to brave the Romish dragon in his stronghold. My friend said, "Edith, you are acting like a Methodist, and as I believe you are gone crazy, I will have nothing to do with it"; but my sister Gertrude finally was brought to think it a good work, and lent me a helping hand. She went at my request to see her old friend Ralph Waldo Emerson, and procure his interest in my undertaking. On the 20th of September, 1869, in company with Gertrude, I went to Concord, Mass., and spent the day at the pleasant home of Mr. Emerson, the philosopher and poet. In the evening of the same day I addressed a private and select audience, which was composed of leading literary lights. R. W. Emerson and wife, Rev. Mr. Alcott and daughters (one of them, Louisa

M., being the well-known authoress of "Little Women"), and other distinguished names, for which the old town of Concord is remarkable, encouraged me by their presence. Mr. Emerson advised me to continue the work I had undertaken, assuring me that I had the ability and knowledge to impart instruction to mankind.

Thus encouraged I resolved to go at once to "Jerusalem, and beard the lion in his den." Accordingly, with only fifteen dollars in my possession, which Gertrude had given me, I went alone to Jersey City, and in the heart of my former co-religionists, in the very community where I had spent the most of my convent life, I gave my first public lectures. I had not one single friend at that time in Jersey City, neither had I money enough to pay for hall or advertisements. However, I was about my Master's work, and I knew He would accomplish it in me. I went to the office of the *Evening Journal*, the leading paper of the city, and to one of the firm I made known the object. He encouraged me in it, and directed me to the proprietor of Cooper Hall, who was kind enough to place it at my service without requiring payment in advance, as is customary. The publisher of the *Evening Journal* being a humane and generous-hearted man, kindly told me to give myself no uneasiness about the cost of advertisements, and if the lecture failed to prove successful he did not wish any payment. So my first lecture in Jersey City was advertised, and on the evening of October 5th, 1869, I addressed a crowded audience in Cooper Hall, only a few blocks away from the convent. I knew not who among them were friends or enemies. During the lecture I was occasionally interrupted by Roman Catholic servant girls. At the conclusion of the lecture a large number of newly-made friends gathered round me, grasped me by the hand,

and begged me to continue in my work, and give them another lecture. Among those who thus gathered around me were many Roman Catholic young ladies, formerly my pupils in the convent at Jersey City. These embraced me most affectionately, and endorsed my statements, and promised never again to enter a Roman Catholic church.

In leaving the hall, an attempt was made upon my life by the Romanists, who gathered in mob force outside the hall. They assailed me with clubs, umbrellas, stones, and other missiles, but the everlasting arms of God were around me, and, aided by my friends, I escaped unharmed. In compliance with the request of many persons, I consented to give another lecture in Jersey City. In the meantime it was necessary that I should get board and protection in a private family, because it was unsafe for me to remain at the hotel where I had taken rooms, on account of the Romish servants. I was introduced to Rev. L. R. Dunn, who was then pastor of St. Paul's M. E. Church; he kindly recommended me to Mrs. H. M. Dunning, a Methodist lady, who nobly opened her doors to shelter me from my enemies. In offering me a home she exposed her house to the attack of Roman Catholics who swore vengeance upon me.

Before I proceed further I will dwell briefly on the goodness of this lady. Mrs. H. M. Dunning is a woman of sterling virtue and a perfect type of the courageous Christian. When I was friendless she took me in without the slightest hesitation—at a time, too, when it was hazardous to herself and family, and when others refused to give me shelter at any price for fear of the mob violence of Roman Catholics. Words are inadequate to do justice to the Christian heroism of Mrs. H. M. Dunning. She is the descendant of a brave family of

Christians. Her grandfather, the Rev. John B. Matthias, was the good pioneer of Methodism in the State of N. Y. He planted the societies of Tarrytown, Nyack, Haverstraw, and many other places, enduring all the early privations of the local and itinerant ministry. His son, Rev. John J. Matthias, established Methodism in Staten Island, N. Y. This Christian lady has at the present time many uncles and cousins in the M. E. ministry. Among her cousins is Rev. B. Adams, of the New York East Conference. With this noble woman I found a home for nearly one year. She was to me as a tender mother, a steadfast friend, devoted sister and companion, often endangering her life by accompanying me wherever I went. Many times noisy crowds of Romanists gathered around her house, throwing stones, breaking windows, etc. She nobly defended me when falsely maligned and misrepresented. The practical Christian Church needs no abler representative than Mrs. H. M. Dunning. My soul overflows with gratitude towards her; and while I live she shall hold the first place among friends in my heart of hearts, and I shall continue to pray to God to make her the recipient of many of His good and perfect gifts.

Gertrude, hearing through the press of the danger which menaced me, came to Jersey City, and remained while I continued my lectures in that city. I delivered a new lecture in Cooper Hall one week after the first. The hall was crowded. Dr. William Butler presided. The interest of the public being now thoroughly awakened, I gave another lecture; but as Cooper Hall was no longer large enough to accommodate all the people who were then anxious to hear me, I made application for the largest church in the city, the Congregational Tabernacle, but was refused for fear of mob violence. The following extracts from editorial notices in the *Evening Journal* will explain some of the difficulties which beset me:—

“A CHURCH OPENED FOR TRUTH.”

“In this community Edith O’Gorman appeals to the Christian public, not for redress, for that she cannot get,

but to expose the sins and shames of that system, and of those institutions which make such fearful wrongs possible of perpetration, and nearly impossible of punishment. She is freed at last from the trammels of early prejudice; and, defying the fear of persecution, she proposes to tell her sad and truthful experience. If ever any injured woman was entitled to be heard, she is. Yet in this very community, where the system responsible for her wrongs flourishes, and where the spires of Protestant churches may be seen from every corner, her application for the use of a Christian church, in which to deliver a public lecture, is refused. We say that this refusal was an act of cowardice of which not only Christians, but men should be ashamed. This we must characterize as narrow-minded and cowardly. What decent excuse can be given by Protestant Christians for thus declining even the smallest show of sympathy for this persecuted but brave girl, who has been converted from Roman Catholicism, not by Protestant preaching, but by her cruel experience of the crimes and persecutions that are the fruits of the Romish conventual system. Why this discrimination in this case? To a reformed inebriate like Gough, or a reformed gambler like Green, churches are readily thrown open, and notices of their lectures are read without hesitation. Yet they, noble reformers as they are, have not half the claim to Christian sympathy that Edith O'Gorman has, for they were the victims of their own follies, while she comes before the community with no stain of guilt of her own upon her. The evils which they seek to reform are fearful and gigantic, but are they any more terrible than those which this brave girl exposes? That Edith O'Gorman should have to ask twice for the privilege of paying for the use of a Protestant church in which to expose the errors and misdeeds of the monastic and conventual institutions of this country, and should have been refused, is simply a shame. We are pleased to record the fact that the trustees of the North Baptist Church have granted the use of their church building to Miss Edith O'Gorman



for the purpose of giving her next lecture. There would be nothing noteworthy in this were it not for the fact that previous applications made for a similar purpose have been refused by at least two of the Protestant churches in this city. The lecturer, of course, willingly pays the price demanded for the use of the church, so that her refusal could not be based on financial objections. We believe her applications were refused because those who control the churches were afraid of mob violence, broken windows, etc. This reason ought not to have influenced any Protestant for a moment. If the truth against Romanism and the evil practices of the Romish priesthood may not be spoken in Protestant churches, where shall it find a voice? We do not believe that any mob will attack any Protestant church in this city, but if we feared they would we would not be so cowardly as to shut up any church on that account. The advocates and friends of truth should always be bold enough to insist on their rights, and to protect others in their exercise, and no apprehension of violent opposition should ever be allowed to put any kind of a gag upon free speech. They should risk the smashing of every pane of glass in every window of every Protestant church; the sacrifice of a lot of window glass for the vindication of the right of free speech would not in our judgment be a very heavy thing. We are glad that the trustees of the North Baptist Church have shown that they think it right that at least one Protestant church should open its doors to give a hearing to one who is desirous of giving testimony against error and wrong-doing, and for truth and righteousness."

From the *Evening Journal* of November 17th, 1869:—

"MISS O'GORMAN'S THIRD LECTURE—THE AUDIENCE INTENSELY INTERESTED—SHE IS INVITED TO REPEAT THE LECTURE.—The North Baptist Church was filled last evening to its full capacity by one of the most intelligent audiences that ever assembled in this city, to listen to the lecture by Miss Edith O'Gorman on the 'Roman Catholic Priesthood; their Rule over their People, and what it

leads to.' Among the audience we noticed several of our clergymen, many of our most respectable Roman Catholic citizens, and one-half of the audience, we should judge, were ladies. Every seat in the house was occupied, and the deepest interest in the lecture was manifest throughout. The effect produced by the lecture may be estimated by the report which we give of an impromptu meeting which was organized immediately after the lecture for the purpose of securing its repetition. Before the introduction of the lecture, prayer was offered by Rev. Dr. Parmley. Miss O'Gorman, who is decidedly prepossessing in appearance, was neatly attired in black; she proceeded in a clear, musical voice, and very distinct utterance, to deliver her lecture, occupying a little more than an hour and a half, and often eliciting the most hearty applause," etc.

From the *Evening Journal*: —

"REPETITION OF MISS O'GORMAN'S LECTURE.—Our readers will remember that the delivery of the lecture of Miss O'Gorman on the 'Romish Priesthood,' a few evenings since, in the North Baptist Church, gave so much satisfaction to the large and respectable audience which listened to it, that an impromptu meeting was held at the close of the lecture, and it was voted to request Miss O'Gorman to repeat it in this city. A committee was appointed to carry out the resolution of the meeting, and, in accordance with their instructions, they have secured the repetition of the lecture on Tuesday evening next, November 30, at the North Baptist Church, in Jersey Avenue. The following correspondence explains the matter fully:—

" 'JERSEY CITY, Nov. 16th, 1869.

" 'Miss Edith O'Gorman,—At a meeting held in the chapel of the North Baptist Church, at the close of your lecture this evening, a resolution was adopted that you be requested to repeat the same, and the undersigned were appointed the committee to convey to you the request. In carrying out the direction of the meeting, please permit us to earnestly express to you the desire we have

that you may deem it compatible with your other duties to comply. We believe that the lessons inculcated by your able and opportune lecture are upon matters of grave importance to the people, and about which it is desirable that they should be better informed.

“With great respect, your obedient servants,

LEWIS NEIL,  
WM. A. LEWIS,  
Z. K. PANGBORN,  
W. B. DUNNING,  
A. D. WHYTE,

} Committee.

“TO THE GENTLEMEN OF THE COMMITTEE.

“*Very Kind Sirs*,—Your magnanimous resolution being duly submitted, has been read with the deepest feeling of gratitude for the very high honor you have conferred upon me. I most gladly comply with the request stated in the resolution to repeat the lecture on ‘The Roman Catholic Priesthood’ on any day next week that the committee may deem advisable. Thanking the gentlemen of the committee for their noble, disinterested sympathy and support, that give me fresh heart and strength in my undertaking,

“I am, very respectfully yours,

“EDITH O’GORMAN.”

Thus encouraged by some of the most prominent citizens of Jersey City; and, despite the numerous threats made by ignorant Roman Catholics to shoot me in the pulpit, and regardless of the foul calumny, slanders, and persecutions of my enemies, I was requested to give a lecture on “The Confessional,” etc., which I gave in the largest church in the city, the Congregational Tabernacle, which I procured without any further difficulty after the Baptists had bravely paved the way. Many of the Roman Catholic priests attended this lecture, and I exposed their misdemeanors to their very faces. Among those present was Rev. Father Owens, whom my readers will remember I met in the steerage of the *Siberia* on my return voyage from Liverpool. Bishop Bayley had received this suspended

priest into the diocese of N. J., making him an assistant curate with Father Corrigan, of St. Peter's Church, Jersey City. I exposed Father Owens to his face, and his expulsion from Jersey City was the result. My success as a lecturer was wonderfully established, as the following editorial will show:—

From the *Evening Journal* of December 15th, 1869:—

“MISS O'GORMAN AS A LECTURER.—Few things more remarkable have occurred than the experience and success of Miss Edith O'Gorman as a public lecturer. She came here a little more than two months ago, without money, without friends, without any existing public interest in the subject that engrossed her own thoughts. She came with only a fixed purpose of making known to the public what she knows and believes of the errors and wrongs of the Romish system of religion. She came here to give her first lecture because it was here that she spent the most of her convent life, and here that she escaped from it after being so foully wronged, and here, if anywhere, her enemies could meet her face to face if they should dare to do so. She had then never herself heard a public lecture or address given by anyone, except sermons by priests and ministers. The subject-matter of her first lecture had been submitted to the criticism of Ralph Waldo Emerson—and there could be no severer critic—who advised Miss O'Gorman to carry out her design of delivering it in public, and she came here for that purpose. But up to that moment this was all the encouragement she had received. Her success as a public lecturer must be regarded as extraordinary. Her first and second lectures in Cooper Hall were crowded to overflowing, and her third lecture drew a full house on the occasion of its first delivery in the North Baptist Church, and an equally large audience was in attendance when it was repeated; and her fourth lecture, the report of which we complete today, attracted a larger audience to the Tabernacle than any other lecture of the season, J. B. Gough's included. Yet her first reception in this city was chilly enough; the only favorable public notice which

she could obtain was given to her by the *Evening Journal*; the first attempts to secure the use of churches for the delivery of her lectures failed; most knew nothing of her of what she proposed to do; others feared that there would be mob violence, and others still were afraid that it might not be just the proper thing to encourage or endorse a friendless girl, who had no helpers but God and her own conscientious purpose. We spoke as we felt we ought, in rebuke of this indifference and cowardice, and need not now repeat it. As we expected the result would be, so it is—Miss O’Gorman has now no lack of friends, or of endorsers of the course she has chosen. The malice and slander of her enemies have done her no harm, and whatever may be thought of her views or opinions, no one who has listened to her or read the reports of her lectures, can doubt either her sincerity or ability. We cannot venture to predict what the result of efforts may be. The Church of Rome has had many powerful assailants, whom she has resisted with a greater or less degree of success. The attack made by Miss O’Gorman is of an unprecedented kind. It comes not in the shape of sermons from the pulpit, or essays from the press, but in that of the living voice of a wronged woman, protesting against the Church which has both misguided and wronged her, and choosing the free public assembly and lecturer’s platform on which to throw down the gauntlet of defence to her numerous and powerful enemies. The American public, even without hearing her, cannot help admiring her courage. When they have heard her, they will concede her ability and fitness for the task which she has so successfully commenced in this city.”

I lectured seven times in Jersey City in less than two months. In the brilliant success which crowned my labor I discerned the powerful hand of God, whose strength was made perfect in my weakness, and to Him be all the glory. Although I encountered many difficulties and annoyances from my enemies through their mob violence and attempts on my life, and their unjust



calumnies and slanders, yet I never for a single moment lost my presence of mind, centred as it is in God. One of the effects of my conversion is, that my heart, which was once so rebellious, now experiences a perfect resignation to all trials and persecutions which assail me. I can now endure calumnies, base slanders, unjust suspicion, and criticism with the same equanimity of spirit as I received laudation and praise. Silently as the dews of heaven descend upon the flowers of the field and cause them to give forth their fragrance, so does the grace of God descend upon my new-born soul, inspiring it with the ability to send forth good deeds.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## THE MADISON RIOT AND ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION

THE North Baptist Church in Jersey City was the first Christian church in which I vindicated truth, and in that church I found a resting place, and was there baptized on the 26th of December, 1869, by the pastor, Rev. H. A. Cordo. I did not connect myself with this church because my salvation depended upon it—no, my salvation depends on Christ alone; neither was I actuated by any sectarian motive, because I regard all denominations which are united in the One Head, Jesus Christ, as equal.

In March, 1870, I addressed the New York East, and Newark Conferences of M. E. Ministers. With reference to that address I give the following newspaper extract from the *Evening Journal*, under date of March 26th, 1870:—

## “THE THIRD DAY OF THE NEWARK M. E. CONFERENCE—

## EDITH O’GORMAN BEFORE THE CONFERENCE.

“Before the appointed hour to hear Miss Edith O’Gorman, St. Pauls’ Church was crowded to overflowing, not a foot of standing room could be had, and many went away unable to gain admittance. This was the largest gathering since the Conference met, and the deepest interest to hear the “Converted Nun,” was visibly manifested throughout the congregation. In introducing Miss O’Gorman, Rev. L. R. Dunn said the lady who was about to speak was well known in this city. She has come before the public from time to time, and given her experience of the inner life of convents. She has been requested to come here this afternoon and give us an inside view of Romanism. We know her, and her statements may be taken with the utmost confidence.

She has renounced Romanism, and has connected herself with a Christian Church in this city," etc., etc.

Rev. Mr. Parsons, who heard me for the first time at this Conference, engaged me to lecture in his church in Madison, N. J., for a benevolent purpose, which engagement I fulfilled on the evenings of the 14th and 15th of April, 1870. Through the expositions which I made in my lectures to Protestant parents of the danger of placing their children in convent schools, St. Elizabeth's Academy in Madison was stripped of its Protestant support. So when I visited Madison, the Romanists resolved to silence my voice for ever, as the following report published April 16th, 1870, will explain:—

**"EDITH O'GORMAN MOBBED.**

**"AN ATTEMPT TO KILL HER.**

*"A disgraceful riot at Madison—Miss O'Gorman lectures and the Roman Catholics assail her—The house where she stays guarded.*

"Miss Edith O'Gorman, so well known here as a public lecturer, gave lectures at Madison, Morris County, on Thursday and Friday evenings of this week, and last night's disgraceful riot was created by some of the Roman Catholic population of that place, and an attempt was made to shoot Miss O'Gorman. Madison was the place where Miss O'Gorman first entered the Roman Catholic sisterhood as a nun, and the headquarters of the Order to which she once belonged is located there. The lectures which she delivered at Madison were advertised, that on 'Convent Life' for Thursday, that on the 'Romish Priesthood' for last evening, and both were delivered in the Methodist Church before audiences that completely filled the building. Many persons on both evenings went away unable to get into the church. On Thursday evening Miss O'Gorman was frequently and rudely interrupted by Roman Catholics in the audience, and much disturbance was created both inside and outside of the house, but no personal violence was offered. Threats, however, were freely made that if Miss O'Gorman attempted to lecture last night all the Roman Catholics

within five miles should be assembled and Miss O'Gorman should be 'done for.'

"Last night the church was again filled, and Miss O'Gorman gave her lecture as advertised. There was no disturbance inside the room during the delivery of the lecture, but a vast mob gathered outside, and several attempts were made by persons to get in at the windows, and there was yelling and uproar about the building. When Miss O'Gorman, at the conclusion of the lecture, came out of the church in company with Rev. Mr. Parsons, who was her escort, and went to get into the carriage which was in waiting, a rush was made by the mob, a frightful yelling was raised, and all sorts of abusive language were used. The crowd closed around Miss O'Gorman, but were kept back partially by a strong body-guard of the students of Drew Theological Seminary. The horse attached to the carriage was frightened and ran, but was caught and stopped, and with much difficulty Miss O'Gorman and Mr. Parsons entered the carriage. Just as Miss O'Gorman stepped into it, a pistol shot was fired directly at her, but fortunately the ball missed its aim, passing through her hat, and the carriage was driven rapidly away to the parsonage followed by both crowds, Roman Catholic, among whom were a large number of women, and the students and other persons, who were Miss O'Gorman's friends. On arriving at the house it was surrounded by the mob, and stones were thrown and violent language used, but Miss O'Gorman was safely escorted into the parsonage. A strong guard of citizens surrounding the house, some constables assisting them, and nearly all the students of the Seminary aiding in repelling the mob, which did not disperse till midnight. The students guarded the house till this morning, and then sent a deputation of their number on the train to escort Miss O'Gorman safely to her home in this city.

"That she is as fearless a public speaker as any man or woman that ever stood on the rostrum or in the pulpit, we think even her enemies will admit. They must not

think they can advantage their cause by demonstrations of violence towards her. A church or an organization that cannot meet the attack of one woman in any way but by such assaults as were made at Madison must be weak indeed.

"This affair has created intense excitement in and around Madison. It is not known who fired the shot, but the leaders of the mob are known, and the authorities will take measures to bring the guilty parties to justice."

God being my protector, I was not intimidated by the attempted assassination. I was laboring in a good cause, and if my Master required my life I was ready and willing to sacrifice it for the sake of Him who was crucified for me. I felt immortal until His work was done. In three days after the riot I fulfilled an engagement to lecture in Morristown, about four miles from Madison, and was there received with great enthusiasm. Of these lectures the Morristown paper, in an issue of April 27th, 1870, says:—

"Washington Hall last evening was densely filled by a very select and intelligent audience, all intent and eager to hear Miss O'Gorman deliver her lecture on 'Indulgences.' Her remarks during the delivery and at the conclusion of the lecture elicited the most intense and deafening applause, the style in some cases exhibiting her *penchant* for humorous colloquy, and at other time rising into high and classical diction.

"At the close a few remarks were made by the Rev. Mr. Parsons, under whose auspices the lectures were given, who took occasion to publicly thank the citizens of Morristown for their respectful attention, and the kind interest and sympathy manifested in favor of Miss O'Gorman; and he then, on behalf of Miss O'Gorman, donated to the Grand Army of the Republic of Morristown an amount of money equal to that received at the previous lecture. All persons who desired, whether Roman Catholic or Protestants, were cordially invited to come on the rostrum and be personally presented to



Miss O'Gorman. Many of both sects gladly availed themselves of the coveted opportunity, after which, accompanied by her escort, she quietly went to the U. S. Hotel. Her lectures here have been a decided success, and all express an unanimous desire to have her speak again, and nowhere will Miss O'Gorman receive a warmer or more cordial welcome than by the good citizens of Morristown, whose law-abiding, order-loving proclivities of free speech are apparent to all. Miss O'Gorman, as a speaker, certainly ranks among the first of her sex. Her appearance and manner on the rostrum are excellent, enunciation clear and distinct, appeals eloquent and earnest, and marked throughout with a simplicity of manner, and the unmistakable stamp of a true lady. She is doing a great and noble work, and the prayer of every lover of truth is that God will strengthen, aid, and protect her, as He certainly will in her vindication of truth, and exposure of guilt and corruption. By her extreme courtesy, affableness of manner and lady-like deportment, she completely won the esteem, sympathy, and affection of all who met her."

In condemnation of the Madison riot the Newark *Courier* says:—

"If proof were needed of the truth of Miss O'Gorman's charges, it would be found in such demonstrations as that which took place at Madison, in the cowardly attempt to shoot a defenceless woman. Such gross disregard of law and order is a shame and disgrace to the good name of New Jersey, and which should not be passed by unnoticed. Let each and all the cowardly scoundrels be seized and brought to justice; and let the law they have outraged be vindicated to the fullest possible extent."

The responsible heads of the Roman Catholic Church made every effort to free the rioters, and the result was that through Roman Catholic influence the would-be assassin was not convicted, although there were witnesses who could swear to his identity, and when the witnesses were called the Grand Jury refused to hear them, and the rioters were set free. The leading papers throughout the

United States came down like a mighty voice in condemnation of Romish intolerance, giving the leaders of that Church to understand that the American people would not allow alien foreigners to rob them of liberty of speech. But is it not most alarming that Rome, in a free country and age, can thus defeat the ends of justice by its insidious outworks? A creed, too, which instigates crime and over-rides the law! And here I ask in the name of humanity, Why are Roman Catholics allowed in a land of freedom thus to suppress any judicial interference with their despotism, and prevent any discussion even of their creed? The Roman Catholic priests are cunning, and yet exhibit in the present age an unprecedented boldness. Things are coming rapidly to an issue, and the signs of a mighty struggle are multiplying, and may soon bring a crisis so solemn and momentous as to shake to their foundations the errors of the Roman Catholic Church. I have no fear for the ultimate issue, for truth must obtain the supremacy, and God will protect His own.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## THE EFFORT TO SILENCE ME BY UNFOUNDED CALUMNIES.

"BLESSED are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of things against you falsely, for My sake." My enemies, having failed to silence the voice of truth by an attempted assassination, resorted to the most malicious calumny, in which a Roman Catholic correspondent in the columns of the *New York Sun* charged me with swindling Sadlier & Co., a Roman Catholic publishing house. My enemies, thinking I would silently overlook this charge, however, mistook me; for this malicious attack fired my soul with indignation, and alone and unprotected I confronted Sadlier & Co.; they protested they knew nothing about it, and no such reports had originated from them. I then proceeded to the *Sun* office and requested a reporter to accompany me to Sadlier & Co., and have the false charges refuted. However, I was put off until 4 p. m., and in the meantime I returned to my residence, where I found Rev. Mr. Parsons, of Madison, who, in company with Mrs. H. M. Dunning, proceeded with me to the *Sun* office at the appointed time. Securing a *Sun* reporter, we visited the Roman Catholic firm, who were put to the greatest confusion and humiliation by our visit; and the result was that the barefaced falsehoods of the Romanists recoiled upon their own heads, as the following publication from the *Evening Journal* of April 27th truthfully details: —

"MISS O'GORMAN'S CALUMNIATORS—THIER CHARGES REFUTED.—The *New York Sun* published on the 25th an

article in which it was stated that Miss Edith O'Gorman obtained money under false pretences from Sadlier & Co., a Roman Catholic firm. Miss O'Gorman acted very promptly in meeting these slanders. She called first alone on Sadlier & Co., and demanded to know if they authorized any such slanderous statements as were published. They disavowed all knowledge of such reports, and were very much disposed to entreat her to cease giving lectures and troubling the 'Church,' but she informed them she did not appear there to receive advice, but to have them do justice by refuting the false reports which they knew to be false. The result was that the persons connected with this firm declared that Miss O'Gorman was never before in their house except in the nun's dress, and when, as a nun, she purchased books and pictures for the convent. So the slander in the *Sun* was effectually disposed of. Miss O'Gorman next solicited a reporter of the *Sun* to accompany her to the place of business of the firm, and hear their retraction from themselves. In company with the reporter, and with Rev. Mr. Parsons, of Madison, the visit was paid, and after much hesitation and dodging, and with great reluctance, similar admissions were made by the parties of the falsity of the reports published, and in its issue of yesterday, the 26th inst., the New York *Sun* was OBLIGED to publish a complete refutation of the unfounded calumnies it published from its anonymous correspondent. Thus promptly Miss O'Gorman secured a refutation of this latest slander. What the next false accusation will be against the lady no one can tell, but whatever it is it will be promptly met. An incident reported by the *Sun* illustrates the style of doing things adopted by Miss O'Gorman's enemies. In the presence of Rev. Mr. Parsons and the *Sun* reporter, the clerk of Sadlier & Co.

said that the fact of Sister 'Teresa' having applied for a 'loan' was reported by letter to Mother Xavier, and she returned a reply that no sister was empowered to borrow money or contract debts by her, nevertheless, she would send back the money, and did send it to them, requesting them not to lend money again to any of the sisters, as she would not pay it.' Now for the trap that caught Sadlier's clerk. At Miss O'Gorman's request Rev. Mr. Parsons went, immediately after hearing these accounts, to Madison, called on Mother Xavier, who, of course, knew nothing of the interviews with the New York Roman Catholics, and inquired if she had any such correspondence with Sadlier & Co. She told Rev. Mr. Parsons that she *never received nor wrote any letters on any such subject, and knew nothing about such a loan!* Rev. Mr. Parsons telegraphed to the *Sun* the result of his interview with Mother Xavier. We think that will do. The parties can settle between themselves which lied about the business. We have given this account of the affair, not because the slanderers were likely to injure Miss O'Gorman, but to show the fashion in which her enemies attack her, and how ready she is to meet all their attacks."

Several days before the publication of the above calumny another unfounded slander, in which Roman Catholics tried to justify the Madison riot, appeared in the *New York Sun* of April 21st; which, while it was malicious, was so stupid that its falsity appeared on the surface. This slander originated from an anonymous Paterson correspondent. The *Journal* of Jersey City of April 21st, 1870, thus speaks of it:—

"Some base and foolish persons among the Roman Catholics seem determined to supplement the disgraceful mob violence, and the attempt to assassinate Miss Edith O'Gorman at Madison, by the most reckless forgeries and stupid lying. The *N. Y. Sun* of this morning publishes a letter dated at Paterson yesterday, but not signed by anybody, which illustrates the foolish and blind fury of some of those Roman Catholics who are



enraged by Miss O'Gorman's public charges against the church and hierarchy. The anonymous letter in the *Sun* is, from beginning to end, an unbroken string of forgeries and lies. The *Sun* heads it: 'The Roman Catholic side of the Madison Riot,' showing that the *Sun* knows the author to be a Roman Catholic. The writer commences with this sentence: 'The riot at Madison, where Edith O'Gorman is well known, ought to end her denunciatory tour.' Well, it was the intention of those who raised the mob and riot that it should end her lecturing, for they threatened that they would take her life, and did attempt to murder her. But their intention was foiled. The letter says that Miss O'Gorman was sent to the convent in Hoboken, that she did certain things in Hoboken. Now, Miss O'Gorman *never was in a convent at Hoboken in her life*, nor in the town except to pass through the town as a traveller. But to show how scurvy and silly a liar the Paterson Roman Catholic is, we quote one of his statements: 'We next hear of her in an editor's office in Jersey City, where she was found by the editorial better half,' etc. Not only is THAT TOTALLY FALSE *in every line and word*, but there was NEVER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE or occurrence at any time or of any sort which could afford even the slightest foundation for the lie. It is a wilful lie, made up without the faintest shadow of fact to originate it. But a score of similar falsehoods have been concocted and told here, none of them receiving any credence in this community, even by the Roman Catholic population. Who originates these silly and malicious lies we don't know, nor do they deserve any notice, except as showing that the only weapons which Miss O'Gorman's enemies seem to know how or dare to use are lying, slander, and forgery, resorted to by those who do know enough to use such base means, and mob violence, and assassination, to which the lower, more ignorant, and more excitable class of Miss O'Gorman's haters seem to take naturally."

In the Roman Catholic paper, the *Boston Pilot*, of the same week in April, 1870, there appeared an anonymous

commuication, signed "Veritas," which was composed of three incoherent letters, signed "de Chantal," purporting to have been written by myself to Mother Mary Xavier, asking to be taken back, etc. I sent a letter to the *Boston Pilot* challenging "Veritas" to produce such letters in my handwriting, with their duly stamped and dated envelopes; but hearing nothing more from "Veritas," I publicly challenged Mother Xavier, if she ever had received such letters from me, to produce them in my handwriting in any Court of Justice in the United States. If she really had such letters, she would have been the very first one to produce them, not as they appeared in the anonymous article of "Veritas," but as a stereotyped FAC-SIMILE of my handwriting which she would gladly have published boldly under her own name, in the defence of her convent. Although the Romish, hierarchy would not scruple to forge such letters in my handwriting if it were possible to forge envelopes with the post-office dates and stamps upon them, therefore, they dare not lay themselves open to such palpable forgery and libel. Moreover, as Mother Mary Xavier *never* heard of me from the day I escaped from her convent until the arrest of Walsh, she was in great doubt and anxiety concerning my fate; yet she was so afraid of scandalizing the convent, that the only effort she dared to make to discover my whereabouts during the ten months she was in such uncertainty concerning me, was to write the letters I have previously mentioned to Bishop McFarland, whom she knew to be a personal friend of my family; for among the many letters and testimonials that I brought to Mother Mary Xavier upon my entrance into her convent, was one from Bishop McFarland bearing the highest testimony to my personal character, and also to the highly respectable, moral, and social standing of my family.

The *Boston Pilot*, "Veritas," and his anonymous, incoherent letters, together with the other false insinuations of my enemies were thoroughly and permanently refuted by the publication and free circulation through-

out the States of the following letter from Mother Mary Xavier to Bishop McFarland, which the reader will remember was given to me by the Bishop when I called to see him after the arrest of Father Walsh:—

\* “St. Elizabeth’s Mother House,  
Madison, New Jersey,  
June 29th, 1868.

“Right Rev. Bishop McFarland,  
of Providence and Hartford.

“MY LORD BISHOP,—In great anxiety of mind I presume to address your Lordship concerning Miss Edith O’Gorman, in religion Sister Teresa de Chantal, who so abruptly and mysteriously departed from our holy community last January, without money and in her religious dress, and of *whose fate we have yet heard nothing*. For a few weeks before she so strangely disappeared she had manifested signs of mental derangement, which we thought might have been caused through her extreme scrupulosity of conscience. From the time she first entered our holy community (in 1862) until she so suddenly left it, her conduct had always been most exemplary and edifying, and she never failed to give the most entire satisfaction in the fervent and faithful performance of all her religious duties and devotions. It is the great suspense and uncertainty regarding our dear sister, and the knowledge of your Lordship’s acquaintance with her and her family, which induces me to address and trouble you in this sad case, by humbly begging your

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\*Some of my English readers may have read a scurrilous and calumnious article, published by the *Romish Universe*, emanating from Priest Foys, of St. Leonard’s, containing the three incoherent fictitious letters invented by “Veritas” in the *Boston Pilot* of April, 1870, and which were never published in the United States after my reply and the publication of Mother Mary Xavier’s letter as given above. Priest Foy and his colleague, the editor of the *Universe*, have attached to the last of these *fictitious* letters the date of May 13th, 1868. The reader will notice that Mother Xavier’s letter bears the date of June 29th, 1868—that is, sixteen days after the fictitious letter.

Lordship to inform me whether she has yet been heard of at her home, or if her parents are aware of her departure from among us; but if they have not heard from her, and still believe her to be safe in our convent, would it not be better for her own sake, and for our holy community's sake, not to undeceive them?—a decision which is entirely submitted to your Lordship's judgment and wisdom.

"My Lord, I have the honor to remain, your Lordship's most humble and obedient servant in Christ.

"MARY XAVIER, Mother Superior."

In justice to Mother Mary Xavier I will say she not only admitted that she had written the above letter to Bishop McFarland, but she always confirmed all that she had therein stated concerning my exemplary life whilst an inmate of her convent, because she dare not do otherwise than acknowledge the truth. She affirmed to the numerous inquirers, both friends and foes to me, who sought her at Madison, that there was not one of her nuns more faithful in the strict and conscientious observance of rules and vows—a fact which was borne out by all the nuns in St. Joseph's Convent, and by Rev. Father Venuta, who was my spiritual director and weekly confessor during the years that I lived in St. Joseph's Convent, Jersey City. If there had been the possibility of the slightest reproach to be found upon my character, either in the convent or out of it, I would never have commenced my lectures in Jersey City, where I was so well known by Roman Catholics. Moreover, if Mother Xavier could have found the least fault with me while a member of her convent, she would soon have published it against me under her own signature, in order to save her convent from scandal by throwing discredit upon me. But the fact that she did me the justice of always telling the truth to those who asked her, proves that she could not do otherwise, unless she lay herself open to an action for libel. But as the Romish authorities were filled with rage against me because of the truth of my statements, which they knew they could not deny, they had recourse

to the only arguments they have—viz., attempted assassination and the circulation of ANONYMOUS CALUMNIES.

My reputation was in the hands of my Master, and I knew He would take care of it, and if for a time He permitted the foul breath of slander to attack my fair name, it was only to add to my future glory and the humiliation of my enemies, who thus sought to vanquish me, only to find themselves vanquished and put to confusion, while I remained clad in the strong armor of truth, honor, and integrity. "Blessed are they who suffer persecution for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," is the soothing promise which fell from the lips of the Man of Sorrows, who was reviled, calumniated, and persecuted, although He was the Son of God, the essence of goodness, the King of heaven. Although my enemies for a while compassed me about on every side, yet I feared no evil, because the Lord was my defence. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me: Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## MY MARRIAGE.

“Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven, and all things else shall be added unto you.”

Of all human influences that of virtuous love is the sweetest, as it is the most powerful. The world has nothing to offer more charming than a pure and happy affection, the sincere outburst of the strength and desires of the soul. Love, when it is in harmony with the enlightened and sanctified conscience, is the richest treasure of our nature. It is Paradise regained. Such a love now fills my heart, a heart so well constituted to enjoy it. My heart, which had been so cruelly tried, so wildly tossed about, so bitterly betrayed through man's treachery, had ceased to regard the whole sex, save in the most distrustful and almost bitter light. I held myself aloof from men, and merely tolerated their presence. I had shut them out from my heart, and in its secret chamber I firmly resolved no man should ever enter to disturb its peace by unhallowed love. My heart craved something disengaged from mere earthly and selfish sentiment; in a word, my heart sought moral perfectness in man, which was something brighter and nobler than the world had ever exhibited to me, and I had ceased to think it possessed such. However, God who had already showered down upon my soul innumerable *Divine* blessings, deluging it in an ocean of heavenly peace, had also reserved for me a new and delightful human existence.

Professor William Auffray crossed my path, and his honest nobility of soul influenced and filled my heart, permeating my being with a new life, a new love, a new happiness. He is a character to me singularly grand

and beautiful. His naturally keen and progressive mind, strengthened by earnest culture, and developed in a wide range of practical and scientific attainments, shook off the trammels of the Church of Rome, in whose theology he had graduated. His strong intellect, keenly analytical, and combined with the severest moral philosophy, could never succumb to the inevitable depravity of such a system as the Roman priesthood, a system that makes vows of celibacy but not of chastity, therefore he threw off the yoke of Rome, with its train of evils. His talents could not be smothered within the narrow limits of superstition and tradition. After rebelling against Romish ordination, he became Professor of Belles-Lettres in the University St. Mande, Paris; and in the autumn of 1868, sailed for the United States. He entered the General Theological Seminary in New York, and was received, on the 17th of June, 1869, a candidate for holy orders in Bishop Potter's diocese of New York, where he was assistant in the French Episcopal Church du St. Esprit, Twenty-Second Street (the learned Dr. A. Verren was pastor, and had been for 42 years).<sup>\*</sup> William Auffray, at twenty-eight years of age, gave to me the first true love of his heart, which my whole nature reciprocated, and to him I was joined in the holy bonds of wedlock on the 28th day of August, 1870, by Rev. H. A. Cordo, pastor of the North Baptist Church, Jersey City.

Dear readers! how beautiful, how real, how near the heavenly is the enjoyment of such a union. All the unspeakable delights of newly-wedded love are up to the present realized by us. The perfectly married pair is

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<sup>\*</sup>When Rev. Dr. Verren died in 1874, Prof. Auffray was waited upon by the trustees of the Church, who desired him to accept the charge as pastor of the Church, at a salary of three thousand dollars per annum; but because I could not conscientiously give up lecturing against the errors of Rome, which I feel to be a God-appointed work, my good husband, Prof. Auffray, joined with me in making the sacrifice by refusing the charge, thereby giving up a lucrative position, and a home with all domestic comforts.

indeed the perfect type of the Lord's Church. The center and throne of love's sweetest highest power are felt in our lives of wedded bliss. And how can it be otherwise with such a husband? he is so good, so excellent in nature and character. To the truest and tenderest sensibility are added indomitable decision and dauntless courage, blended with a calm, practical judgment, great patience, and a beautiful simplicity and modesty: while suffusing all his character with a heavenly light is a living and controlling piety. He is a philosopher and scholar in thought, a hero in action, a child in feeling and simplicity, and a Christian in his daily life. Powerful and handsome in person, elegant and gentle in manners, winning in conversation, ardent and affectionate in nature, he is well calculated to make a most loving, tender, and devoted husband and father. Truly God was good to me when He gave me William Auffray as a strong, safe pilot, to guide me safely into the haven of rest, where, anchored in his heart, so brimful of love, I am sheltered at last from all the storms, and tempests and whirlpools.

Thanks, my God!

## CHAPTER XXIX.

## CONCLUSION.

IN the Roman Catholic Church, Holy Scripture—God's Word—is trampled under foot, and tradition, which is man's word, becomes practically and substantially the only and conclusive rule of faith. What was it that brought wreck upon Jerusalem, and occasioned the extinction of all its ancient grandeur? Its people preferred the traditions of men to the commandments of God, and from the moment they began to do so, corruption grew in strength, and spread its contagion to the utmost limits of the Jewish race.

The Jews had ecclesiastical authority, outward sanctity, a succession most legitimate, a gorgeous ritual, the law and promises. They had prophets commissioned from Heaven to guide and teach them; they had a Temple, the glory and the admiration of the whole earth; but in an evil hour they preferred the traditions of men to the commandments of God, and from that moment they experienced and proved the great truth, that the Church which tries to steal a ray from the glory of God takes a consuming curse into its own bosom. When the Son of God came to Jerusalem, how did they receive Him? They who boasted of being the only "true Church" exclaimed "Away with Him! Away with Him!" and at last He was condemned to be crucified by a people that declared themselves the "chosen of the Most High." What consuming and crushing judgment followed! The Roman armies concentrated in hostile array around guilty Jerusalem, and every stone of that once powerful city cries out in dumb but awful eloquence of departed glory. And why? Because, like the Romish Church, the people forsook the fountain of living waters, and hewed

out to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that could hold no water! My dear readers, if you wish to arrest a scarcely less dreadful national ruin; if you would stem, under God, the tide and torrent of Romish superstition which now threatens to inundate this land of liberty, cling closely to the Bible, and defend with your lives its sacred teachings. It is the only revealed will of God; therefore, reject every practice and doctrine which has no foundation in its sacred volume. If the Church of Rome would adopt this process, it would at once dissipate the unauthorized dogmas which lamentably encumber it.

The Œcumenical Council of Rome, in 1870, after a long debate and much dissension, declared Pope Pius IX. to be infallible; nevertheless, he was soon after stripped of his temporal power, and the enlightened world rejoiced at the change. This was a severe blow to that system of superstition, the Romish Church, and at the present time in Italy how precarious is the footing she possesses, even in the soil of her ancient domination.

I believe that God's truth will triumph, but I also believe that as God works by means, so on us devolves the responsibility of a diligent and faithful use of the means which he has placed within our reach. Whatever those means are let us use them. Let parents in their homes teach Protestant truths, and keep their children away from Roman Catholic influence. Let me remind you, especially mothers, to do thus. You have great power; a mother's influence in her home, when sanctified is mighty; therefore, on the mothers of this great and flourishing Empire devolves a responsibility which no language can express.

Investigation and progress will bring priestcraft to the surface. The attention of the public has been attracted lately to the defense of a Protestant State school system. On this point of education, your children cry out to yield not one inch to the demands of Jesuitry; therefore, never give up your cherished, noble, State school institutions; they are the fountains from which your precious children are to draw the elementary prin-



ciples of intelligence, which must be the basis of their character. None fear these schools as do the Roman Catholic priests, and they would gladly undermine the system, for in its flourishing they foresee their loosening hold upon the coming generation. They are making bold efforts, and may yet make bolder in order to cheat your children of the blessings of a Protestant State school education. I trust the Protestants will not suffer this encroachment without at least a show of resistance.

Again, let the Legislature enact laws for the inspection of convents, in order that they may be open to the censure or approval of the public; but as those institutions now exist there is no protection or redress for the victims of convent crimes. From the convent prison no appeal to justice can be heard; their voiceless victims are walled in with their complaints and pleas from the ears of a bamboozled humanity. Let the prison doors of monasteries and convents be thrown open to their deluded inmates, so that they may return to a useful and virtuous life in society and the world.

Dear reader! you have patiently followed me from the time you beheld me filled with all the enthusiastic fanaticism which the potent priesthood of a dazzling hierarchy could inspire in an ardent and deluded girl. You have seen me sever every sacred family tie, sacrifice a happy home, and tear myself from the close embrace of beloved parents, to place myself on the altar of self-immolation. You have sympathized with me when subjected to the unmitigated tyranny, unnatural discipline, fearful temptations and struggles which beset me in the convent prison. You have seen me penniless and alone in mid-winter, thrust out upon the mercy of a cold and selfish world, flying in desperation from convent crimes, and you have had a faint picture of the desolation, trials, persecution, and heart struggles which followed. At last, after grief and sorrow whose weight and extent

seem almost incredible, you have rejoiced in my miraculous conversion, and in the inexpressible light and heavenly peace of my God-born soul, and in the wonderful power of grace manifested in my labors; and you have been permitted to look upon our life of wedded bliss, and partake in spirit of my joy. Gentle reader, in thus accompanying me through the sorrow and tribulation, the joy and gladness of an eventful period of eight years, can you refrain from exclaiming, "Verily, truth is stranger than fiction"?

I have portrayed my experience with a frank truthfulness. What I have related is, alas! too true. I have given you a plain, candid, and simple statement of facts, which CANNOT BE REFUTED, and of which the testimony is accessible to all. I have been solely guided by a sincere desire to rectify wrong and remove evil, to expose errors and uphold truth; and in this brief account of cruel persecution I have neither felt nor experienced vindictiveness—although a just indignation may here and there have colored my language with a tinge of reproach—when speaking of those who were chiefly instrumental in producing or adding to my sufferings. I freely and entirely forgive my enemies, and all those who so deeply injured me, and pray God to open their eyes that they may see and appreciate the errors of a system to which I attribute all my sharp and bitter experience.

Dear Roman Catholic readers! you must all feel in the inmost recess of your hearts that every bitter sorrow I have depicted is the result of a system of religion full of errors and superstition; and do you think I deserve to be mobbed, and assassinated, calumniated and reviled, because I relate a true and plain statement of facts which have been developed in my own experience? Oh! how I yearn to draw you all into the one flock of our only Shepherd, Christ Jesus, where, like me, you will be fed

at last with the true bread of life, and cleansed, regenerated, and sanctified by the precious saving blood of our only Lord.

How can you, with all the enlightening influences of this free land surrounding you, suffer yourself to be so cruelly blinded to the true interests of your soul? A very little faithful examination will prove to your satisfaction the hollowness of the services you attend, the insincerity and indifference of the majority of the persons styling themselves priests who minister before you at the blazing altar. Your own good sense should impress you with the truth that no mere man—much less a selfish, ambitious, sensual man, as most priests are—can stand between you and your God. The utmost a minister can do for you is to *help* you on the way towards heaven, by prayer, counsel, and example; and this is all good ministers do. There is but one Mediator, God the Son; the Holy Word, on which Roman Catholicism professes to be founded, can prove no other, notwithstanding its prayers and invocation to the Virgin and the great company of saints. Don't allow the Bible to be "sealed" from your eyes any longer. You have a right to consult that which concerns your soul's salvation, and your individual responsibility compels you to examine and judge for yourself. "Search the Scriptures, they are they which testify of Me," is a direct injunction of our Heavenly Father.

The cunning Roman clergy, knowing too well the results of a careful reading of God's word, endeavor to keep it beyond your reach; they would not lose their blinded, superstitious followers; for it is the ignorance of the masses of Roman Catholics which constitute the great security of the priesthood.

And now, dear readers! sad and sorrowful as has been my experience, yet I would not have it otherwise. I now

bless the Hand that hath chastened me so severely, for only through the fiery furnace of tribulation could I have tasted the ineffable sweetness of the children of God. Through no other means could I have been strengthened and purified to labor in the Lord's vineyard. Dear readers! I will now lay down my pen to resume it again when Providence directs. Truly, the "Lord hath drawn me up out of the terrible pit, and placed my feet upon a rock, and put a new song upon my lips."

The midnight woe that I've been through,  
Was but the cross to save;  
My Savior for me was crucified,  
And dying, He forgave.

Dear readers: ere I say Farewell, I would ask your prayers to accompany me in my sojournings until the will of God be accomplished in me.

N. B.—If any of my readers would like to know the persecutions heaped upon me the past forty-four years, since the first edition of this book appeared in 1871, they will find a continuation of my life in the book entitled "Perils and Trials of the Escaped Nun, Edith O'Gorman, during her Forty-four Years' Lecturing Experience," &c.

Read the Continuation—A New Book by Edith O'Gorman, "HER PERILS AND TRIALS," which for want of funds has been out of print since 1908.

*London, August, 1913.*

N. B.—Owing to financial loss of all money six years ago, in 1906, I have not been able to issue another Edition of "Perils and Trials," which gives an account of all the Romish persecutions and attempts on our lives.

# APPENDIX.







# APPENDIX.

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*My Providential Meeting with REV. WM. M. WALSH in  
Queensland, Australia, on the 21st August, 1887.*

The reader of this book will remember that the last time I saw Rev. William M. Walsh was in the house of Rev. James McGahann, at Mount Holly, New Jersey, U. S. A., on the 25th of September, 1868. I had heard nothing of his fate from that time until February, 1871, when the first edition of this book was published in the United States, and Archbishop McCloskey sent Father McGahann to me with the object of bribing me to cease its publication, the particulars of which I have previously stated in the preface of this work. On that occasion I asked Rev. James McGahann the fate of Father Walsh, when he thus replied: "After Walsh had parted with you in Mount Holly, I, acting upon the advice of the Dominicans, enticed him into the Dominican Monastery for a few weeks of quiet retreat, until the scandal should blow over; but when at the end of two weeks I called at the monastery to see Father Walsh I was told by the Abbot that he was then on board of a steamer on his way to La Plata, South America, where he was to be shut up in one of their monasteries to do penance for his terrible sin of bringing scandal on the Church!"

I asked him if he had heard anything of his fate during the time he had then been in the monastery, when he said—

"I was told last week by the Dominican Abbot that

Father Walsh died at La Plata about two months ago from the effects of the cruel and austere penances imposed upon him."

I had no reason to doubt the sincerity of Father McGahann in telling me this, therefore I believed his statement to be the truth; and I had not the slightest suspicion that Rev. William M. Walsh was alive until God in His wonderful Providence brought me face to face with him on board the s.s. Quirang, in the harbor of Townsville, in the tropics of Queensland, on the 21st of August, 1887. He came on board the steamer to meet Bishop Cani, of Rockhampton, who came to Townsville *on purpose* to get Walsh out of the way before my arrival, as the Rockhampton newspapers had stated that I was to stop one week in Mackay before proceeding to Townsville, but as we only remained two days in Mackay we boarded the very same steamer the Bishop was on, thus proving that there is an over-ruling Providence guiding all things, for instead of Bishop Cani getting Walsh out of my way, he was the very means of bringing us face to face—because, if the Bishop had not been on the boat Father Walsh would not have had occasion to meet him there, and I might never have had the opportunity of recognizing him. During my stay in Townsville I heard from an authentic source that Rev. William M. Walsh was subjected to severe penance in a Dominican monastery in La Plata, where he remained for seven years; when at the end of that time, deeming his spirit sufficiently broken—for seven years' penance in a Dominican monastery is enough to crush the heart of most men—he was sent back again to Bishop Quinn, in Queensland, who at once appointed him parish priest over a small and poor church in that out-of-the-way and torrid Townsville, where the heat is so excessive that, although we were there in August, one of the winter months, it was

seldom less than ninety degrees in the shade. If the heat is so excessively great in winter, what must it be in summer? It appears that the Romish Church has condemned Father Walsh to a purgatory on earth as a further atonement for his sins. He had been there twelve years when we met, and he is there still. When we first arrived in Sydney, New South Wales, from New Zealand, in March 1886, the Colonial newspapers, in commenting upon our work, stated that I was to lecture throughout the Colonies of N. S. Wales, Queensland, Victoria, and Tasmania for one year, and then return to England. Upon the appearance of said paragraph in the press the Roman hierarchy of Australia immediately sent the Rev. William Walsh away to Ireland, where they kept him, until at the end of the year we sailed for Tasmania, when the newspapers made another mistake in stating that we had sailed for England; whereupon the heads of the Romish Church in Australia, believing us to be out of the Colonies, had Father Walsh back again to Townsville. But as "man proposes and God disposes," they brought him back too soon for the success of their plans. We had timed our visit to tropical Queensland for the winter months of June, July, and August, therefore, after a six weeks' lecturing tour through Tasmania and South Australia, we commenced our work in Brisbane, Queensland, in June, just at the very time Father Walsh had returned to his parish. Having not the slightest idea that the man was alive, much less that he was living in Townsville, we had made all arrangements for concluding our Australian mission in that very town. But as we arrived in Townsville one week before the lectures were advertised, Father Walsh had no idea that I was coming there, until he was brought face to face with me on the steamer, therefore his recognition of me was so sudden and unexpected that he was unable to control his agita-

tion, for, when he caught my eye I lifted up my hand, and said aloud before all present—

“How wonderful are the ways of God, William Walsh, when after nineteen years we meet again!”

I thought the poor man was going to faint away; he turned as pale as marble, and staggering to the side of the steamer he buried his face in his hands, manifesting the deepest emotion. But Bishop Cani, who was enraged with him for betraying such feeling before the passengers, rudely hurried him away.

On the morning of the day on which I was to deliver my first lecture in Townsville, I sent Father Walsh a copy of my book “C. L. U.,” together with a letter which, as I sent them by special messenger, I know they were placed in his hand. In the letter I challenged him to read the book through, and if there was one statement in it concerning him that was not PERFECTLY TRUE, to deny it or put me in prison for libel. I read a copy of that letter the same night to my audience, where the most intelligent Roman Catholics of the town were present. On the following day a committee of the leading members of his church waited upon him at his house, told him that they would stand by him if he would only clear himself from the charges that I brought against him, and bring a libel action against me. Notwithstanding the fact that Bishop Cani was present, and did all that he could to prevent him from confessing the truth, yet he had the honesty to say, “It is not possible for me to bring a libel action against her, because IT IS ALL TRUE, TOO TRUE!” and then he added, “But I have done penance.” It appeared as if the Romish authorities had no great confidence in Walsh’s adherence to his Church principles, because Bishop Cani kept strict watch and guard over him during the three weeks that I was in Townsville and its vicinity. Just before we left the



place I called at Father Walsh's house in order to see him concerning some false reports that the Romanists were circulating; but the Pope's CANI, the Bishop, was on watch, and would not permit him to see me. However, I had an interview with the Bishop instead. The following letters, which I wrote to Rev. Wm. M. Walsh and to Bishop Cani, will more fully explain the particulars of our meeting, and my interview with his Bishop. The following is a copy of the first letter I sent to Father Wm. M. Walsh:—

“Townsville, August 24th, 1887.

“REV. WILLIAM WALSH.—After nineteen long years we have met again, and an over-ruling Providence brought you face to face with me last Sunday morning on board the steamer, thus affording me the chance of recognizing you, who for many years I believed to be dead. I could not help pitying you when I saw you turn pale, and quail and tremble in the most terrible agitation as you recognized the ONE WOMAN in all the wide world you least expected, and you least desired to see. Although for several years you have hid yourself here in this out-of-the-way miserable place, growing fat in idleness, yet after nineteen years your sin has again found you out, and the woman you so deeply wronged nearly twenty years ago has, in the Providence of God, come to this place to expose the very errors of the Church which you were then willing to abandon. In order that you may have no excuse I send you a copy of my book—‘Convent Life Unveiled’—and if you have not yet read it, do so now, and if there is one statement in it concerning you which is not true, I CHALLENGE you to deny it, or else put me in prison for libel! Indeed, your own heart will tell you I have depicted you in a far more chivalrous character than you ever deserved. When you were arrested by the order of my sister for the attempted

crime which caused me to escape from the convent, were it not that I had mercy upon you by refusing to appear against you, you know you would have been condemned to fifteen years' imprisonment for the ATTEMPT alone; consequently you would not be to-day the fat, sleek, and indolent-looking priest that you now are, of a degrading and demoralizing system of religion which you once so urgently begged me to abandon. Oh! how *you have changed!*—but not for the better. Then you had been a member of the Romish *priesthood* for four or five years, and were not so vividly stamped with its DEGRADING IMPRESS as at the present. You are now a perfect type of a Popish priest, whose mind for twenty-four years, through the cesspool of the confessional, has become the moral sewer into which has been poured the abominations and filth of your sinful flock. You have not the appearance of a man who has repented of his crimes, and yet I know that you must have experienced some feeling of remorse whenever you thought of the deep wrong and unutterable sorrow and grief you inflicted on me, whom nineteen years ago you, in your moral cowardice, left friendless and alone to suffer the weight of your crime, to endure the burden of your shame by the calumnies and defamation heaped upon me by your co-religionists, both priests and people. But the woman you tried to degrade has, through her own integrity and natural purity, stepped over and far beyond that abyss, and stands before the world to-day in God's strength, clothed in His righteousness, conscientiously exposing the errors of that infamous system which you once professed unbelief in. I am no longer the friendless, despairing, and heart-broken girl you parted from nineteen years ago. But, thank God, I can count my friends by the thousand, among the noblest, the most cultured, the highest and best Christians in America, England, Scot-

land, and the Colonies, who have deemed it an honor to take my hand and invite me to their homes and their mansions; while the dregs of society, the ignorant papists, have hurled their curses, bricks, and stones at my head—the only arguments your Church knows how to use against the truth. I have infinite pity for you and all Roman Catholics individually; but the idolatrous system of religion that has made you what you now are I hate and detest. Oh! how can you, for the sake of an easy, idle life, remain in that soul-destroying Church, so well described in 17th and 18th chapters of Revelation as the ‘Scarlet woman, drunken with the blood of the saints.’ Do come out from her and be no longer partaker of her sins. As you know that you cannot deny the statements concerning you in my book, and that I have undeniable proof in your letters and numerous witnesses, why not come out now like a man and acknowledge the truth, and express sorrow for what you have done, and be no longer a deceiver and a hypocrite? It is the only reparation you can make for the bitter sufferings and wrongs that you have inflicted upon

“Yours truly,

(Signed)

“EDITH O’GORMAN-AUFFRAY,

“Formerly ‘Sister Teresa de Chantal.’ ”

[This letter was read before a large audience in the Old Masonic Hall, Townsville, August 26th, 1887.]

The following is a copy of my letter to Bishop Cani:—

September 21st, 1887.

*To the Roman Catholic Bishop of Rockhampton.*

“BISHOP CANI.—Rev. Sir: You were undoubtedly aware of my movements from the Rockhampton newspapers, which mentioned the fact that I was on my way from there to Mackay, where I was to stay for a week and then proceed to Townsville. It evidently appears that you desired to arrive in Townsville before me, in

order to get Father Walsh out of the way, for you took the first steamer after our departure from Rockhampton, which we providentially boarded at Mackay, where we remained for two days only. I say *providentially*, for were it not for the fact that you were on board the same steamer, Father Wm. M. Walsh, of Townsville, would not have had occasion to meet you as he did, which, fortunately for me, afforded me the chance of recognizing in him the self-same Father Wm. Walsh, whose *premeditated* crime caused me to escape from St. Joseph's Convent, Jersey City, U. S. A., over nineteen years ago. It was your knowledge of that fact, and of Father Walsh's past history, which induced you to visit Townsville during my stay there, in order to prevent us meeting, if possible, and to watch him and guard the interest of 'Mother Church.' You know the meaning in the Italian language of your name 'Cani'—a most appropriate one in your case, as you have proved yourself to be the Pope's faithful '*Cani*,' by remaining on watch and guard over Father Wm. Walsh for three weeks, until you were sure that I had departed from the vicinity. However, you were unable to prevent him from confessing the truth to his Church Committee, as he had the honesty to say to them that my charges against him 'were all too true.' When, in the interest of truth, I called to see Father Wm. Walsh at his house, on Wednesday, September 8th, you received me with more than savage rudeness, and—an adventurer named 'Fred Fulton,' in Dunedin, N. Z.; with a real '*canine*' ferocity. I did not expect to be received by you or any Popish priest with any great degree of courtesy or Christian politeness, but I certainly did expect to be treated with the common decency and courtesy which a lady in my position commanded. Allow me to recall to your mind, for your serious contemplation, the particular incidents of the scene. At 3 p. m. on

Wednesday, the 8th instant, accompanied by my little son of eleven years, and a Roman Catholic little girl of fourteen years, I called to see Father Wm. M. Walsh for the purpose of requesting him for *his own sake* to prohibit his people from circulating a libellious, unfair, and *one-sided* account of the discussion I had with a *tool* of Rome and as no one knew better than Father Walsh *its entire falsity*, he would be fair enough to do me the justice, if his people published the affair at all, to see that they gave a *faithful* account of *both sides*, taken from the leading Dunedin newspapers, of which I had copies with me, which gave an impartial and clear account of the victory I gained over Fulton, and the humble *apology* he made to me before an audience of 4,000 people in Garrison Hall, Dunedin, on the evening of March 2nd, 1886. Desiring, therefore, to see Father Walsh on this matter, and also to let him and the whole world see that I was not afraid to meet him, nor unwilling to withhold from him a Christian forgiveness if he, in the spirit of true repentance, should have taken the occasion to ask my pardon for the cruel wrong and bitter sorrow he inflicted upon me in the past, I called at his house, where I knew both you and his Irish curate were staying, and was told by his housekeeper that Father Walsh was out of town, and would be back at four o'clock. I did not believe her, for I am quite sure I saw you both through the window as I drove away, and you must have heard me tell the housekeeper that I would be back in an hour, therefore you had ample time to get your forces ready to meet your *formidable opponent*, which you evidently did in thoroughly Popish style. It would be intensely amusing, were it not so deplorable, to realize the fact that three Romish priests—one of them a bishop—and all three immensely stout, able-bodied men, were so much afraid of one little woman, accompanied by two children, that you should feel the need of



calling to your aid a Romish policeman, who, in the garb of a tramp, awaited my coming; and when he rudely thrust himself before me as I entered the gate, and placed himself in my way on the steps, I mistook him for a beggar intent on asking alms, and only became aware of his true character and purpose when, as I ascended the verandah steps, this disreputable-looking creature brutally laid violent hands upon me, *savagely assaulted me*, and cursed a horrible oath that I should not enter the house. The Irish curate and yourself were standing on the verandah at the head of the steps, and were eye-witnesses of the cowardly assault made by that ruffian whom you had called to your aid, perhaps for the very purpose of using *brute-force* against the *one woman* you Romish bishops and priests stand so much in fear of. Shame upon such cowardice!! Two priests and a bishop of the so-called 'true church' have to call a brutal policeman to defend them against one woman, whose chief strength consists in the truth and justice of her cause, her only shield and defense being her entire confidence in God, her Heavenly Protector. When I shook myself free from the brutal grasp of the dastardly ruffian, you very rudely said—"Well, what is it you want?" I replied, 'I wish to see Father W. M. Walsh.' You said, 'You cannot see him, but you can see me instead.' 'Very well, then, I will see you, Bishop Cani.' Whereupon you invited me to step inside, and when we were seated, I said, 'Do you know who I am?' You answered, 'Yes, I know your history.' 'Well, then, you know that I am Edith O'Gorman, the nun, who, over 19 years ago, escaped in a nun's dress from St. Joseph's Convent, Jersey City, U. S. A., because I would not remain in that convent to gratify Father Wm. Walsh's unlawful love; you know the enormity of his sacrilegious crime, that he, an anointed Romish priest, had, in the presence of *your* "Blessed Sacrament," before

*your* "Romish Tabernacle," under the lamp of *your* "sanctuary," in the house of God, attempted the most atrocious of crimes—to desecrate a consecrated virgin?' You answered, '*Yes, I know all that.*' I said, 'Yet knowing all that, you and your Church condone his crime, make him a parish priest, thus giving him the direction of immortal souls, and appoint him a spiritual guide over a convent of seven nuns!' You replied in an angry tone, 'I do not wish to enter into a conversation with you.' I then explained to you the business on which I wished to see Father Walsh. You said, 'You cannot see him, he is busy.' I said, 'You will not permit him to see me, or else he is hiding himself from me because *he is afraid*, and *you are all afraid.*' You said, 'I will not enter into conversation with you, but you will ask God Almighty's pardon when you come to die.' I answered, 'I live every day as if I were to die, and I ask God's pardon every day, trusting for my salvation to the *infinite merits* of Jesus, my *one and only* Mediator; not like you Romish bishops and priests, who live all your lives in the indulgence of your sinful passions, anxious to *hide* them from the world, and then when ye come to die, implore the church and the saints, and the Virgin Mary, to ask God's pardon for ye.' You replied in great anger, 'I will not enter into conversation with you.' I said, 'Because you know that you are in error, therefore you do not like to hear the truth.' Again you furiously exclaimed, 'I will not enter into conversation with you.' 'Well, then, let me see Father Walsh, and ask him to keep his people in order.' You said, 'He cannot keep his people in order.' I answered, 'No wonder, for he is not able to keep himself in order.' You shouted once more, 'I will not enter into conversation with you.' 'Well, then, Bishop, will you please hand these Dunedin paper reports to Father Walsh?' You turned pale with rage, and with intense

ferocity of voice and gesture yelled, 'I will give him nothing!!' 'Will you please tell him about it?' You fairly jumped with anger, and shouted, 'I will tell him nothing!' I said, 'Oh, Bishop Cani, do not lose your temper, and get into such a passion; it shows the weakness of your cause, and I must say that I have never been treated with such a savage rudeness and discourtesy before in my life as I have been treated by you, a bishop of the so-called true church.' You shouted fiercely, 'I do not care.' The Irish curate and the Irish policeman were present, heard all that passed between us, and witnessed your unchristian and ungentlemanly conduct. No pen can describe the fierceness of your manner, and the violence of your temper, which so frightened my dear son, that he cried, 'Oh, mamma, come away from this terrible place,' and the little Roman Catholic girl (who is the *protege* of a good Protestant lady) said to me afterwards, 'I never thought a bishop would lose temper like that and act in such an unchristian manner; I shall never go to the Roman Catholic church again.' Do you not feel ashamed, Bishop Cani, of the true picture I have drawn of your discourteous treatment of me? which I have recalled to your memory for the purpose of showing you to yourself in the light that others see you, who are not blinded by superstition and ignorance. Patrick Molloy, the name of the cowardly policeman who was present, undoubtedly expected you to exert the 'supernatural' power that he and others like him, in their foolish ignorance, superstitiously believe Roman priests to possess, viz., power to 'paralyze me'—'fasten me to the chair'—'turn me into a stone,' or 'pillar of salt,' etc., which the Romish priests would have done long ago if they had *such* power. But you know very well that priests *have no power more than other men*; nor have they as much power as an ordinarily good Christian man,

for unlike him, ye priests often have not the grace nor the power to control your sinful passions, nor to curb your violent tempers. As a bishop of the so-called 'true church,' you arrogantly claim to be the 'vicar of Christ,' 'true shepherd' of the 'one fold.' If you really believe in this blasphemous presumption, you look upon me as an 'apostate,' 'a lost sheep' 'outside your fold.' But how did you act the part of the good shepherd towards me? Was it by lovingly and tenderly seeking to persuade me to return? On the contrary, you repulsed me with wolfish fierceness. But let me assure you that I would suffer the martyrdom of being burnt at the stake a hundred times, if possible, rather than return to the bosom of that 'mother of iniquity,' to the bondage of superstitious idolatry, to the *mercy* (?) of the 'shepherds' of the Romish Church. Are Romish priests good shepherds?—forsooth! they are oftener wolves in sheep's clothing. Do Romish bishops and priests represent the meek and lowly Savior, as ye presumptuously claim? On the contrary, ye represent the 'Man of Sin' at Rome, wearing the livery of the 'scarlet woman sitting on the beast,' clothed in fine linen, and silk, scarlet and purple, decked with gold, silver, and precious stones and pearls, etc. Oh, ye bishops and priests of Babylon; ye are worse than the priests of Baal! ye daily commit the crime of *simony*, by making merchandise of the souls of men, through the blasphemous fable of purgatory—yet set high prices upon *masses*, and the sacraments of baptism, matrimony, dispensations, etc., when ye know that the grace of God is *free to all*. You know, Bishop Cani, that if I had been actuated by the spirit of revenge I could have paid you back in your own coin, by remaining another week in Townsville, and have Patrick Molloy, the policeman who so brutally attacked me, arrested for *assault*; consequently you and the Irish curate would have been summoned as witnesses

of the assault, and the scandal would have spread in the newspapers through Queensland, thus bringing Father Wm. M. Walsh more prominently before the public. But I have refrained from doing this, because I have Christ's love in my heart enabling me to act with Christian forbearance, and thus heap coals of fire upon the heads of my enemies by returning good for evil. In conclusion, I advise you to read and study the Bible, instead of the absurd and blasphemous fables and legends which you read every day in your 'Breviary.' Read and peruse especially 1 Timothy 3rd chapter, where Paul says to Timothy that the bishops and deacons of the true Church of the living God shall all be the husbands of one wife, thus proving the Romish Church to be *false* and unscriptural in her bachelor hierarchy. Study well the Holy Word of God, and learn from it the lessons of love and charity taught by the meek and divine Jesus, who even for the vilest sinner had sweet words of loving tenderness and forgiveness. His only words of indignation were uttered to the Scribes and Pharisees, when He condemned them as hypocrites, who made the outward profession of being the only children of God. They fasted and prayed before men, put on outward robes and holiness, thus proclaiming that they, the Pharisees, were holier and better than others; for which spiritual pride Christ rebuked them thus: 'Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which, indeed, appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.' (Matt. xxiii. 27).

"Does not the Church of Rome, like the Pharisees of old, profess to be the only true Church? She puts on an outward appearance of holiness—her cardinals and bishops are decked in scarlet and purple—her priests, monks, and nuns put on the garb of sanctity, to appear



before men fasting and praying, filled with *spiritual pride*. All these works they do to be seen of men. Her clergy love the greetings in the high places, in the streets and market-places; they love to be saluted as 'master,' 'your eminence,' 'your grace,' 'your holy reverence,' etc., and they require of all men to be called 'Father,' although our dear Savior says, 'Call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father which is in heaven.' (Matt. xxiii. 9). If you ponder well the Holy Scriptures and church history you will find that the Church of Rome *ceased* to be the primitive, true, and incorruptible Church of Christ in the sixth century; since which time the popes and councils have made and promulgated the blasphemous dogmas of 'Papal Supremacy,' 'Indulgences,' 'Confessional,' 'Transubstantiation,' 'Celibacy of Priests,' 'Purgatory,' 'Image Worship,' 'Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary,' 'Infallibility,' etc. All of these human dogmas have no foundation in the Word of God, but are proved therein to be *false*—the doctrine of devils, etc. Trusting that God may give you the grace to see the errors of your *false*, apostate church,

"I remain, yours truly,

"EDITH O'GORMAN-AUFFRAY.

P. S.—This is an open letter, and we are both at liberty to publish it."

Prior to our departure from Australia, I wrote a second and farewell letter to Rev. W. M. Walsh, as follows:

November 14th, 1887.

"REV. WM. WALSH.—After serious consideration and earnest prayer, I feel constrained to write to you a few farewell words of advice, for we are now on the eve of our departure from Australia, and, in the providence of God, about to place thousands and thousands of miles once more between you and the woman your accusing

conscience fears so much; yet who can say that you and I shall never meet again on this wide earth, when, after nineteen long years, the wonderful providence of God brought face to face with me the man who had caused me such bitter sorrow, and whom I believed to be dead. In 1871 Archbishop McCloskey sent your intimate friend, Rev. James McGahann, to me with the offer of more money than I could realize from my book, 'Convent Life,' etc., if I would cease to publish it, and bring such scandal on the Church. It was on that occasion Father McGahann told me that you had died in a monastery in South America doing penance for your terrible sins. Although I knew the Romish Church to be the 'mother of lies,' and her priests adepts in telling falsehoods in her interest, yet I believed him. I had not the slightest suspicion that you were alive, until one week before I met you, when I heard that the name of the Romish priest in Townsville was Wm. M. Walsh; even then I thought that it might be a mere coincidence of name. The proverb that 'The guilty man doth flee when no one pursueth,' can well be applied to you, from the fact that as soon as you and the heads of your Church became aware of my arrival at Sydney in April, 1886, they made you take flight for Ireland, where you remained until you thought I had left the Colonies. How true it is that, while 'man proposes, God disposes.' In order to shield your Church and yourself from further scandal you did all in your power to avoid meeting me; but the justice of God followed you, and, in His own way and time, brought you face to face with your victim, and your sin again found you out. Oh, William Walsh! remember that the retribution of a just God will overtake the *unrepentant sinner*. 'Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small; though with patience, He stands waiting, with exactness grinds He

all.' Ah me! unless you repent of your crime the retribution of God will follow you here, and through all eternity! Remember that 'doing penance' is not repentance. If you had truly repented, you would experience that perfect peace with God which passeth all understanding, and which is only given to those who accept Jesus as the one and only Mediator, the all-sufficient Savior—who have the sweet consciousness that their sins are all forgiven through Christ's precious blood. If you were thus repentant and at peace with God and man, you would not be afraid to meet me, who now earnestly pray for your conversion. I do not know what the future years of this life may bring to us. You and I may meet again before nineteen months have passed away, or we may never again meet in this life; but I do know that you and I will meet at the judgment-seat of God, and that you cannot hide yourself from your just Judge, nor from me. You will not be able then to send your Bishop Cani to me in your place, as you did when I called at your house in Townsville, when the measure of your iniquity towards me was made to overflow by the indignity, abuse, and insult which you permitted me to receive from Bishop Cani, and the brutal violence of the policeman. If you die unrepentant and without faith and trust in Jesus only, the Judgment Day will be one of wrath for you, and you will call upon the mountains and the hills to fall upon you, and hide you from the face of your Judge. I wish to meet you at the throne of God among the white-robed band who have washed in the blood of the Lamb—I wish to meet you, trusting in the same Christ that I trust in. If you desire to be saved you must give up trust in the 'false Christs' shut up in the 'closets' of 'secret chambers' of your Romish tabernacles—the idol of bread, which for six hundred years the apostate Church of Rome has worshipped and taught,

in her false doctrine of the 'false Christs' which our Savior Himself foretold in the 24th chapter of St. Matthew, 23rd, 24th, 25th, and 26th verses; also in the 13th chapter of Mark, and Luke xvii. Read the 2nd chapter of Second Thessalonians, which describes the Romish Apostasy and her Pope, 'The Man of Sin, who exalteth himself above all that is called God,' etc. If you desire to save your immortal soul, you must cast off the errors and the idols of the Romish Church, which you cannot, nor do you believe in now no more than you did nineteen years ago. If you possess a Bible, Douay or any other version, read it through, and learn that from the beginning of the world God condemned, hated, and punished idolatry as an unpardonable crime. The Second Commandment of God, 'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them,' etc., etc. This commandment of God the idolatrous Church of Rome expunges from her Catechisms, because it condemns her gross idolatry; and in order to make the 'ten,' she divides the 'Tenth' Commandment into two. Like all Pagan systems, Rome tries to excuse her image worship with the same plea the Buddhists and Brahmins make—that the images, statues, and pictures remind them of their gods and goddesses, as they remind Romanists of the Virgin Mary and the Saints, etc.

"How can you remain in that 'mystery of iniquity' when you well know her errors and her apostasy? How can you, with your intelligence, day after day bow down before the blasphemous altars and idols in your church at Townsville? How can you endure the sight of that horrible idol—viz., 'the life-sized image of a dead Christ across the lap of a half-sized image of the Virgin Mary,

which you have in that church? But that idol of the 'dead Christ' is really a type of your dead religion, which is spiritually dead, no life in it, nothing but a dead show of gorgeous ceremonies. Oh, why do you, for the sake of an easy indolent life, remain in it, leading immortal souls to spiritual death? If you only had the moral courage lately shown by Rev. Dr. McGlynn, of New York, and, like him, dared throw off the Pope's yoke, and be a free man in the exercise of the liberty of conscience, spirit, and action, which God gave to everyone! It is not yet too late to come out from that modern Babylon and to repent of your sins, for DOING PENANCE has nothing to do with repentance. Although you confessed the truth to the committee of your church members, yet you well knew that it would be worse for you if you did otherwise, when they said they would stand by you if you brought a libel action against me. Everyone now knows that your reply was, 'It is not possible for me to do so, for IT IS ALL TRUE, TOO TRUE; but I have done penance.' The last part of your answer is most hypocritical. You cannot really believe that human penance has power to cleanse your soul from the smallest sin. Have you forgotten the enormity of your sacrilegious crime, that you could say such a thing? Exercise your memory and recall the events of twenty years ago. In the April of 1867, when you came to St. Joseph's Convent, Jersey City, U. S. A., you found me—not a happy woman, certainly, because no true woman can be happy buried in a convent, cut off from all that is noble and good, and worth living for, and surrounded by bad example—but you did find me to be an earnest, fervent, conscientious, and honored member of the order of nuns to which I belonged, respected and trusted by the superiors, and all who knew me. From the day I first saw you I had a presentiment of coming evil, a foreshadowing of the



events which followed, therefore I shrank from you and tried to avoid you. When called to the Mother House for the retreat of June, 1867, I told Mother Xavier my feelings in regard to the premonition of evil I experienced, imploring her not to place me in your way by sending me back to St. Joseph's. She scoffed at my fears and ridiculed me, and, as you know, I was the only nun of all the others who had previously been there that she did send back, giving me charge over the others as Sister Superior, although Sister Aloysius was twelve years my senior, thus throwing me more than ever in contact with you. When your professions of love to me became so ardent, and the struggle I made to resist the growth of such unlawful love in my heart was so great that I felt I could not bear the weight of temptation, I wrote to Mother Mary Xavier, and implored her to remove me from your influence. She answered that 'the will of my superiors was that of God, and they willed me to remain where I was.' You professed for me such a true, undying love, that I could have believed an angel from heaven would attempt my destruction sooner than you; yet you, with diabolical premeditation, planned my ruin, which, with cold-blooded deliberation, you attempted to carry out. Will you ever forget the wail of agony, the heart-wrung cry of anguish that went up to Heaven from the pure virgin heart of your innocent victim when she realized the horrible and sacrilegious nature of your crime? Yet, in the face of all this, you can say, 'I have done penance.' Were it not for the infinite mercy of God who converted my heart, filling it with His divine love, there might have arisen in my heart a bitter hatred of you; but instead, God's light and love enables me to pity and forgive you, while I hate the wicked system which made you such a monster of treachery, and which yet holds you in her iniquitous fold. The pharisaical

portion of your answer, 'I have done penance,' proves to me that you are as great a hypocrite to-day as you were twenty years ago. You do not look the least bit penitential. You know perfectly well that if it were possible for you to do penance equal to all the barbarous scourgings, flagellations, and crucifixions of the flesh ever performed by Pagan fakir or Roman saint; if you could fix yourself on the top of a pillar in the air, like another Simon Stylites, until the end of time, yet you could not wipe from your soul one little fault, much more sin. It is only the precious blood of Jesus and His infinite merits that can take away sin. All that Jesus asks of you is to give Him your heart—a contrite, broken, humble heart. You dishonor Christ through the false doctrine of 'human merit' and 'works of supererogation.' The Romish Church makes the all-sufficient sacrifice of Calvary, the merit of Christ's precious blood, a negative and secondary benefit by her fable of Purgatory, which makes 'merchandise of men's souls.' May God, in His infinite love and mercy, give you the grace and courage to throw off for ever the degrading bondage of Popery, and go to Jesus, and to Him only! There is no other name under heaven whereby you can be saved. Go, therefore, to Jesus in the spirit of repentance and true contrition, and He will receive you, and wash your sin-stained soul as white as snow in the fountain of His precious blood—is the earnest advice and wish of

“EDITH O’GORMAN-AUFFRAY,

“Formerly ‘Sister Teresa de Chantal.’”

I also sent the following letter to Archbishop Dunn, of Queensland, who was appointed in the place of Arch-

bishop Quinn, who formerly filled the Archiepiscopal See of Queensland, and who died about four years ago:

November 17th, 1887.

“To the Right Rev. Archbishop Dunn,

“Metropolitan of the R. C. Church in Queensland.

“REV. SIR.—As Metropolitan of the Roman Catholic Church in the Colony of Queensland, I feel it a duty, in the interests of truth and morality, to communicate to you a few facts concerning the past history of Rev. William M. Walsh, who for the past twelve years has been parish priest of the Roman Catholic Church in Townsville, a fact of which you are well aware. Notwithstanding that I feel quite sure that you are perfectly well acquainted with the whole career of that unscrupulous priest, yet in order that, through the plea of ignorance, you may have no loophole of escape from the duty and responsibility resting upon you concerning the moral or immoral character of your priests, I will, therefore, state a few facts connected with the past history of Rev. William M. Walsh, and my escape from the convent. Some time in the year 1867, when you were a priest at Toowoomba, you will remember that there were six Romish priests, who had some quarrel with Bishop Quinn in Queensland, which caused them to sail for the United States of America. The names of those priests were—Revs. James McGahann, William M. Walsh, Hogan, Renehan, Sheehan, and Davitt; and you were undoubtedly acquainted with some, if not all of them. When they arrived in America, they were at once received into the diocese of New York and New Jersey. Rev. William M. Walsh was appointed as curate to St. Joseph’s Church in Jersey City, to which was attached St. Joseph’s Convent, of the order of ‘Sisters of Charity,’ of which I was an honored member, having the perfect trust and confidence of the superiors. The zeal and

fervor with which I performed all my duties, devotions, and penances were so earnest and enthusiastic, that even during my novitiate the Rev. Mother Mary Xavier held me up as an example to the other novices for being the most edifying and exemplary among them; consequently, I was the first novice in that community that the Rev. Mother had ever dispensed from the fulfilment of the full term of the novitiate required by the 'Rules,' which she did by shortening the term five months. Mother Mary Xavier's confidence in me was so complete, that a few weeks after I had made my public profession, and received the black veil, she sent me in company with some other nuns to found and establish St. Joseph's Convent in that parish of Jersey City, in August, 1864, and appointed me to the office of 'Assistant Sister Superior,' which position I held until June, 1867, when she gave me entire charge as 'Sister Superior' over St. Joseph's Convent, which at that time numbered seven nuns, which office I retained and held until I escaped in January, 1868. These facts which I here state concerning my position in that convent are undeniable, challenging contradiction, and Rev. William M. Walsh will, I am sure, be the first to confirm their truth. I mention these things to prove the malignity of the false calumny, that so many Romish priests and people wilfully circulate when they say, 'She was expelled from the convent'; 'She ran away to avoid expulsion,' etc. Rev. William M. Walsh, shortly after he came to St. Joseph's Church, Jersey City, made professions of love to me, wanted me to leave the convent with him and throw off my vocation and religion, and yield to his professions of love to become his wife in the world; and because I could not, as a conscientious Roman Catholic, consent to do this, his conduct caused me to escape from the convent in the nun's dress, without money, without scarcely a thought of what might become

of me except that I might get anywhere away from that Romish priest. Although I had witnessed the wickedness and licentiousness of priests and nuns, and the sway they gave to their evil passions, yet in my blind delusion as a sincere Roman Catholic, I condemned and blamed the individuals, not the wicked system. But now, with the marvellous light of God's grace in my soul, I know that it is the erroneous, false, and iniquitous system of Popery that is to blame for the individual wickedness and licentiousness of so many of its clergy, monks, and nuns—for the drunkenness, crime, degradation, and ignorance of the masses of its people. Yet the apostate Church of Rome arrogantly claims to be '*the only true Church, out of which no one can be saved.*' Are Roman Catholics the only Children of God? Alas! 'by their deeds ye shall know them.' Examine the statistics of Great Britain and the Colonies, and you will find that although they scarcely comprise one-fourth\* of the population, yet they form the majority of those who fill up the penitentiaries, prisons, gaols, and reformatory institutions. The chief magistrate of Liverpool, England, in 1883, told me that according to the latest statistics of that town, Roman Catholics comprised scarcely one-third of the population, yet they committed more than two-thirds of the crime. These are facts, and facts are stubborn things. 'A good tree cannot bring forth bad fruit, nor a bad tree good fruit.' Alas! 'by their deeds shall ye know them.' How can the people be good when their priests and leaders so often give full sway to the indulgence of their evil passions, their only anxiety being to hide it from the world!

"During my three months of traveling through Queensland I often met Romish priests on the boat and elsewhere in a beastly state of intoxication. And you

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\*In the Colonies they scarcely number one-fourth, but in Great Britain scarcely one-twentieth.



must be perfectly aware of a great deal of their dissipation, just as you must have been perfectly aware of the scandal that the crime of Rev. William M. Walsh caused your church. You undoubtedly have read by book, 'Convent Life Unveiled,' therefore must know all the sorrow and suffering William Walsh inflicted on me. You will see from the copy of the *Sydney Protestant Standard* which I sent you, containing a copy of the letter I sent to your suffragen, Bishop Cani, of Rockhampton, describing the interview I had with him in the house of the Rev. William M. Walsh, with what savage rudeness and discourtesy this Bishop Cani treated me. Although you sent Father Wm. Walsh away to Ireland to be out of my way, in order to avoid further scandal to your church, yet you must have seen the justice of God, who, in His own way and time, not only brought us face to face, but in a most providential manner brought forth a wonderful confirmation of my statements from Father Walsh himself, when he confessed to his church members that my charges against him were 'ALL TRUE, TOO TRUE.' Now, Archbishop Dunn, I ask you, in the name of common decency and morality, if you think it is right to condone the crime of Rev. William M. Walsh by reinstating him in the Church on which he has brought such scandal, by making him a parish priest, with the care of immortal souls? How can you, with his past history before you, appoint this libidinous priest to be the spiritual adviser and confessor of a convent of nuns, when you know that one of the most spotless of women and purest of nuns that was ever consecrated to God within convent walls was, by that priest, desecrated, for if he did not succeed it was not his fault; the crime is as great on his soul, for he had accomplished it in his heart. In the face of all these undeniable facts, your priests and people have everywhere heaped abuse, insult, and calumnies upon

me; they have tried to take my life by attempted assassination and mob violence, because I conscientiously speak the truth, and expose that which I firmly believe to be wicked errors of that apostate Church of Rome, that wicked Church which has accepted the dogmas and decrees of popes and councils, the lying wonders, fables, and traditions of men in preference to the Holy Bible and the commandments of God. She has overlaid the pure and simple religion of Christ with vain ceremonials, and with the Pagan grandeur of gorgeous vestments and theatrical alluring, outward show and form, until there is not a vestige of the primitive Church of Christ left in her. I sincerely believe the above description to be a true and faithful one of the church and system of which you are the representative head in Queensland. Archbishops, bishops, priests, and people swallowed up in the Egyptian darkness of error and delusion. The blind leading the blind, and all fall into the ditch of destruction. I know that if the secret history of all the priests in Australia were known, and the criminal indulgence of their passions exposed, many of them might be even worse than Father W. M. Walsh. You may say in excuse that Father W. M. Walsh 'has done penance.' It is an insult to the all-sufficient atonement of Jesus, who gave Himself on Calvary's Cross once for all as a living sacrifice for the sins of the world, to place human merit beside the infinite merits of Christ. He is the one and only Mediator between God and man—the one High-Priest. The sinner who with true repentance and a lively faith accepts Jesus as the only Savior, and trusts in His infinite merits, will be saved and have eternal life. The last words our blessed Lord uttered on the Cross were—'It is finished.' The sacrifice is complete. Sinners have only to believe and trust. Good works alone will never produce faith; while faith will always produce good

works. May God give you, and all deluded Roman Catholics, the grace to see the errors of your Church system, and the moral courage to throw off the weight of its bondage, is the earnest wish of

“Yours respectfully,

“EDITH O’GORMAN-AUFFRAY,

“Formerly ‘Sister Teresa de Chantal.’”

“P. S.—This is an open letter and may be published by you or I.—E. O’G.-A.”

The preceding letters to Rev. Wm. M. Walsh, Bishop Cani, and Archbishop Dunn, were all very extensively published in the Colonial newspapers of the different Australasian Colonies; and Father Walsh’s acknowledgment of the truth of my statements brought down dire confusion upon the Romish Church, because during our sojourn of nearly three years in the Australian Colonies, the popish priests and people had recourse to their usual weapon of columny, whereby they endeavored to throw discredit upon my statements. They had even gone so far as to say that no such priest as Rev. Wm. M. Walsh had ever been in Australia, while they were well aware of his whereabouts, and the heads of the church exerting every means to prevent us meeting, by sending him to Ireland, etc. The following account of my meeting with Father Walsh, given by an eye-witness, is taken from the *Sydney Protestant Standard* of September 10th, 1887, communicated by J. G. Bradley, Esq., one of the leading Protestant gentlemen of Townsville, who, together with some friends, came to the steamer to meet and welcome us to Townsville. He says:—

“The s.s. Quirang, conveying this lady of renown, arrived in the bay on Sunday morning, August 21st, Accompanied by some friends, I went out to meet and welcome the visitors, and escort them to the hotel. Just as the tender was leaving the wharf, the Rev. W. M.

Walsh stepped on board. I was surprised to see 'his reverence' going out to the same vessel with us, and wondered what was up. We passed the usual greeting of the time of day, etc., and on arrival at the ship's side, I then found that Father Walsh had come to meet Bishop Cani, and that the wolf and the lamb were actually on the same vessel. We were cordially greeted by Mr. and Mrs. Auffray and their son, and Father Walsh was received by his Bishop. Shortly afterwards Mrs. Auffray glanced up and saw the Bishop, and which I supposed to be an entire stranger to her, in the person of Father Walsh, when she excitedly grasped the arm of her husband, and exclaimed, 'See, William, that is the very same Father Walsh that caused me to escape from the convent in Jersey City.' She recognized him at once. While she was pointing him out to her husband, Father Walsh, looking up, caught her eye, and his recognition of the former Sister Teresa was so sudden, and so apparently unexpected, that he seemed dazed, and as if about to faint; his face assumed a pale ashen hue, he trembled and tottered, and buried his face between his hands; while Mrs. Auffray held up her hands and exclaimed aloud,—'How wonderful are the ways of God, after nineteen years we meet again!' This is another fact bearing on the statements of Mrs. Auffray respecting Father Walsh.

"On August 26th, Mrs. Auffray gave her first lecture here to a crowded audience, many of our most respectable Roman Catholic townspeople being present. During the morning Mrs. Auffray had sent a letter and a copy of her book, 'Convent Life,' to Father Walsh. A copy of the letter was publicly read to the audience challenging him to read the book, and if he found a sentence in it about him that was not true, to deny it or else

put her in prison for libel. Some of his leading people, who were present, called on him next day, and 'offered to support him if he would bring a legal action against her.' He plainly told them that he could not, because 'her charges against him were all true, too true.' It must be pleasing to all true Protestants, and especially to the fair lecturess, to know that several of the leading adherents of Father Walsh's church state that they will not again enter the Roman Catholic Church. I may also add that Father Walsh is very often seen in the streets of Townsville; but since Mrs. Auffray has come among us, he has vanished as if by magic."

In conclusion, I ask my readers to pray for Rev. W. M. Walsh, for by what I heard from those who know him, the unhappy man has no more faith in the teachings of his Church now than he had twenty years ago, but is in reality an infidel at heart. But as there is nothing impossible to God, may He, in His great mercy, yet convert his heart and give him the grace to boldly come out from the "mystery of iniquity," and become an advocate for the truth of God's Word.

Those of my readers who feel anxious to know more of my wonderful experience and God's powerful deliverances toward me in saving me from the fury and the malice of my enemies, who have so often sought my life, will find it in my new book, "The Perils and Trials of the Escaped Nun," first published at Manchester, England, in 1883.

It is sad that my interesting and instructive book, "Perils and Trials, &c.," should be out of print for the lack of £80 or £100 when there are wealthy Pro-



testants who would help the Protestant cause greatly by giving the comparatively small sum. I have for forty-four years carried on the work, trusting only in God, and never appealing for financial help until now in my declining years I am left penniless. Except the sale of my books, I have nothing to live on but my faith in God.

EDITH O'GORMAN-AUFFRAY.

*August, 1913.*

















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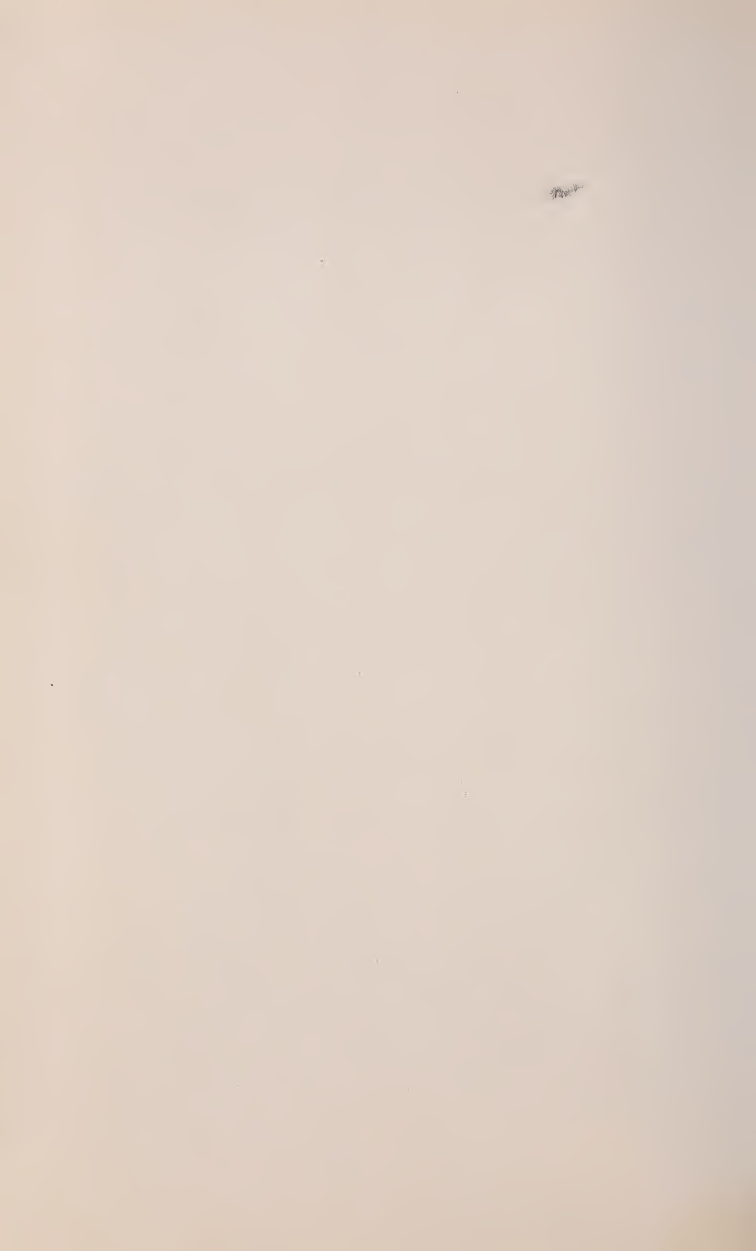
















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